

An Unholy Friendship: A Harry Potter Fanfiction

Disclaimer: I do not own Harry Potter or any of its associated characters; I do own this story and the OC spells explained at the end of each chapter.

AUTHOR'S NOTE: Ever had one of those ideas that just WON'T go away? Well, if you have, here's mine: rest assured that this is simply a test, if enough like it and review, I'll keep going, otherwise, it's goodbye to this fanfic.

Plot: AU COS/POA/GOF/OOTP: In the Chamber of Secrets, a young TR senses Harry's potential and makes him an offer; give me what lies within you and I shall never harm you again; unlocking Harry's potential, the younger DL begins to reveal an array of secrets, lies and revelations to Harry, but what about the REAL Voldemort?

Tags: DarkPowerfullIndependantHarry; DarkHermione; ManipulativeDumbledore; SERIOUS AU of COS through to OOTP; Jealousy; Marauders;

Pairings: Harry/Hermione; Others TBC...

Normal Speech

'Thought'

'Parselmouth'

/Speaking Through A Bond/

Chapter 1: A Strange Proposal

Chamber of Secrets:

Tom Marvolo Riddle; more known to the world as the Dark Lord Voldemort, the dark soul of the Slytherin watched with a deep shock and disappointment as he saw the mighty body of Slytherin's creature fall. The Basilisk, responsible for all those attacks on the school, was now just a slowly rotting corpse, one of its fangs missing and its eyes blinded.

Above where the body of the Basilisk had fallen, Harry Potter, the self-made Golden Boy of Gryffindor, staggered with pain as he felt the intoxicating power of the Basilisk's venom coursing through his veins.

Both wizards knew that, within mere moments, Harry would be dead and through his sacrifice, the spirit of the Dark Lord would be reborn, into true flesh and blood. And yet, as he watched the scorn of his life stagger down the giant statue, towards where the body of Ginny Weasley was lying motionless, Tom actually began to wonder about the boy.

No ordinary child could kill a Basilisk, not to mention how he had drawn the Sword of Godric Gryffindor from within the old Sorting Hat; and, as if all that wasn't enough, the boy was a Parselmouth, which even Tom, as everyone else, knew was a sign of the next Heir of Salazar Slytherin. Watching Harry, the gears in the young Lord's mind began to turn: this boy was meant to be the Heir of two Founders, yet he was battered, broken and had little more power in his magic than a Squib.

As Tom thought on these facts, one name, the same name that Tom blamed for his own downfall, rang out through the Chamber as a sibilant hiss, "Dumbledore!"

Harry slid down the wall. He gripped the fang that was spreading poison through his body and wrenched it out of his arm. But he knew it was too late. White-hot pain was spreading slowly and steadily from the wound. Even as he dropped the fang and watched his own blood soaking his robes, his vision went foggy. The Chamber was dissolving in a whirl of dull colour, but as he looked through the foggy sight, he then heard the word leave the lips of the spirit.

With still-burning Gryffindor defiance, Harry asked, "What...about...him?"

Tom looked to Harry, his own red eyes cold and devoid of mercy; if the boy died then he would be reborn, but, on the other hand, one way or another, the fool would win: this was what he wanted for Harry. To die at the hands of the Dark Lord, but Tom, for some strange reason, knew he could not let that happen.

Making his mind up, he sighed and took a seat next to Harry, his eyes down as he spoke to the boy, "You are a real enigma Harry Potter; with no real family, no real power and no real hope for the future. All you are is someone with a scar and no clue how you survived my elder self nearly twelve years ago."

"I still...don't see what...this has to do with...Dumbledore," gasped Harry, feeling pain and fire ignite in his blood. "What's this...Tom? Last chance...to gloat?"

Tom's reply was the last thing Harry expected to hear, "Hold out your hand."

Deciding that he was going to die anyway, Harry obliged, but was stunned when he then saw a patch of scarlet swimming past, before he heard a soft clatter of claws beside him. "Fawkes," said Harry thickly. "You were fantastic, Fawkes...I just wasn't strong enough..." He felt the bird lay its beautiful head on the spot where the serpent's fang had pierced him.

"Do you know why that bird came to you Potter?" asked Tom, watching as thick, pearly tears were trickling down the glossy feathers of the beautiful bird; when Harry denied him an answer, Tom explained, "It's because he's yours: Fawkes, as you call him, has always been yours; it is for the same reason that you were able to call on Godric's Sword."

"Why?" asked Harry, his voice growing stronger; as his vision began to clear, Harry then saw Tom sat next to him, his eyes neither showing hatred or scorn, but a look of awe and wonder. It was both mystifying and yet Harry just sat there; Tom obviously knew something and, before he killed him, Harry would find out what that something was.

Tom's answer, once again, was what Harry didn't expect to hear; looking into Harry's slowly livening emerald eyes, the young Dark Lord answered, "It's because you, Harry, are the Heir of Godric Gryffindor."

"And you're the Heir of Salazar Slytherin," replied Harry, his voice stunned by the revelation. With a scoff, he added, "Poetic really; our ancestors battled tooth and nail and now we do the same thing; so,

come on Tom, you see that Fawkes has healed me with his tears and now I'm ready to finish this."

"Do you know why I came back last year?" asked Tom suddenly, his voice calm and close to curious as he added, "Do you know how I survived the curse myself?"

"No," answered Harry, his body struggling to stand as he looked to the spirit and added, "But it is something that, now you mention it, has had me curious: I mean, according to Dumbledore, my Mum saved me, but what saved you?"

"First off," Tom answered, "I guess you could say that your Mother, dear sweet Lily Evans, did save you, but she, in hindsight, saved me too. Harry, tell me, have you ever heard of a Horcrux?"

"No," Harry replied, and his mind immediately flashed to Hermione; had she mentioned it or something? The reason he asked himself was because, as soon as Tom mentioned it, alarm bells rang in Harry's mind.

"I didn't think so," Tom sighed, "Well a Horcrux is, in essence, a piece of a person's soul that has been ripped from their body; split from the body, the soul piece is put into an object or a chosen vessel and, when death greets the original caster, the Horcrux activates and pulls the person back from death. Now I, by the time Halloween happened all those years ago, had crafted a vast number of Horcruxes, but the one that was denied to me happened when I least expected it: Harry, do you know what splits a soul?"

"No," Harry answered, his eyes widening as he remembered why he was down there, "Wait: Tom, you're just distracting me so that you can come back!"

"I'm not," Tom explained, "Harry, I want you to listen to what I have to say; then, if you do not wish to hear more, I will step aside and let you do what you must. But, if you do that, then you will never be free."

"Free from what?" asked Harry, Tom's answer catching him off guard for the third time in less than half-an-hour.

"Free from Dumbledore and the curse that I, myself, have placed within you, Harry," answered the Dark Lord, before he gently pressed a finger against Harry's scar and, with a sigh, shook his head as he added, "Against the younger me, this has no defences, but when the elder me lies nearby, then you are hurt. Harry, tell me now: what do you think is the reason for your scar?"

As he thought about it, Harry recalled Tom's words before, with a slow glare at the Slytherin, he asked, "It's a Horcrux, isn't it?"

"It is," replied Tom, "And you are too Harry; you see, when the curse rebounded, my dark magic latched onto you; now, before I continue, I want you to tell me if you wish to hear this."

"Tell me," whispered Harry, watching as Tom rose again and turned away, his head looking up to the statue of Salazar Slytherin.

"Well," explained Riddle, "Let me put it this way: the Horcrux, Harry, is the source of great, albeit dark powers that you have always had access to; it is the source of training and knowledge that would suit a boy like you. Now, tell me, which lesson do you find yourself resenting not knowing more about?"

"Easy: Potions," answered Harry, his eyes cold as he looked from Tom to Ginny's unconscious body; he could do it; he could save her, but Tom's words now had his interest.

"Ah, ha," replied Tom, "And when you fail in that lesson, do you...feel anything? Anything that doesn't make sense or, when you later look back, you tell yourself that it isn't you?"

Harry thought on the question: did he feel any raw emotions whenever he failed? Thinking, Harry then realised that he did feel something; a raw, untapped potential and the knowledge that, whenever Severus Snape would turn on him, he knew that he could do better, but the means to do that were always just out of his reach.

"Every time," Harry spoke without realising, his eyes narrowed as he then felt the same raw knowledge coursing through him; with Fawkes healing his wound, Harry began to feel something very powerful inside him, something that he had never truly felt, or, if he had then it was a long time ago.

"And?" asked Tom, "Do you ever try to investigate this feeling? Or do you just let it slide?"

"The second," admitted Harry, feeling suddenly very ashamed of himself; had he always had the potential to do the right thing? Was, as Tom said, this Horcrux the secret to all his untapped power?

"So," Tom suggested, "Why would that power, that potential, become unavailable to you? You who bear the moniker of the Boy-Who-Lived? You who have survived the Avada Kedavra Curse and lived to tell the tale? You who, through sheer willpower, have overcome a Basilisk and solely defeated the Heir of Slytherin? Why Harry Potter, are you so weak?"

Harry looked up at Tom, fire burning in his emerald eyes as he shook his head, "You're not going to convince me he's the enemy Tom; he has always done what's best for me."

"Really?" asked Tom, before he sat back down again and added, "When you met him Harry, did he give you anything you wish to tell me lecture? Did he stare into your emerald eyes and then just waive it off?" When Harry didn't answer, Tom smiled and continued, "This is just a guess Harry, but, I'd be willing to say that, through no fault of your own, you have gone from being the White Knight of the Wizarding World to the pawn of Albus Dumbledore: as you saw in my memories, he gave me the same lecture and the same look: he seeks only to control us Harry; us who are the Heirs of Hogwarts; us who have true power and potential. Now, this is just a theory, but I am willing to bet that there are wards around your magic that you can very rarely feel breaking, such as when you discovered your power of Parselmouth. Behind those wards is the power to take charge of your own life, but the energy, Harry, the energy behind that power belongs to me. And that, young Heir of Gryffindor, brings me to my point."

He stepped close to Harry and took the boy's hands, before, with a deep and piercing stare, Tom asked, "What will you do to save her?" He nodded to Ginny, who was still unmoving and frozen solid.

"Anything," Harry answered, and he realised that it was the truth: before, he had just wanted to defeat Tom, but now, after hearing what had just been revealed to him, the young Gryffindor realised

that he would do anything humanly and magically possible to rescue her.

"Then listen to me very carefully Harry," Tom instructed, "You have only touched the surface of your powers; if you wish to save her, then you need to be willing to relinquish what you know as the truth and embrace your true power. The diary, Harry, is also a Horcrux and, with the last drips of power, I will be reborn; however, if I had a...second choice, I could release Miss Weasley. So here's my proposal," He turned to Ginny, walked over, picked up the diary and turned back to Harry, the diary in his hands.

With a voice devoid of any evil intentions, Tom Riddle, Lord Voldemort, requested, "Harry, give me the Horcrux within you and I will show you how to access the power within you; we could go from enemies to being friends and I, Tom Riddle, not Lord Voldemort, would be honour-bound to keep from killing you. In short: give me what lies within you and I shall never harm you again, as well as saving Miss Weasley's life: well, Harry Potter, do we have a deal?"

Harry looked from the diary, to Ginny, and then to Tom as he considered it, a part of him actually disgusted that he was considering this. Looking back to Tom, he asked, "Where will you go?"

"The magic of the Horcrux will draw me into your mind," explained Tom, "From there, I will grow strong once again and, at the same time, I will be able to help shield your mind and slowly rebuild your magical potential. It will take little more than a month and then, with your help Harry, Tom Riddle can return and, together, you and I can bring down Dumbledore's manipulations and deceits and I can have a second chance to do what's right."

"But what about the real you?" asked Harry suddenly, "If he comes back, what will happen then?"

"I leave that choice to you," Tom explained, his eyes cold as he added, "Besides, he is Lord Voldemort while I am Tom Riddle: he is no longer a part of me, but, if you walk away from this, then he will hunt you and come after the Horcrux; at least this way, you are prepared and have a confidant whom owes you their life."

Harry, looking once again to Ginny, realised that, as much as he wanted to save Ginny, the one thing he wanted more was to know his true power; especially if he could finally get himself out of the rut that was formed from copying Hermione and being humiliated by Snape. There was, Harry realised, only one true answer to Tom's offer and, as much as he hated it, Harry knew that this, as Dumbledore would say, was for the best...for the Greater Good even; with determination in his voice, Harry nodded and answered, "Let's do it!"

Tom, smiling with success, approached Harry and, nodding behind him, added, "By the way, in case you didn't figure it out, being a Parselmouth marks you as the new Heir of Slytherin, so you, Harry, are now the Heir of Two Founders and, once this is done, I will personally relinquish that title onto you: now, calm your mind and, no matter what happens, do not look Dumbledore in the eyes."

Then, all Harry felt was a powerful burning in his scar, before he felt the diary shaking in his own hands and, as he looked, he saw a white trail leaving the diary and enveloping Ginny's body; as the glow faded, Harry gasped as the youngest Weasley opened her eyes and gave a gasp; as Harry hurried toward her, she sat up. Her bemused eyes travelled from the huge form of the dead basilisk, over Harry, in his blood-soaked robes, then to the diary in his hand.

She drew a great, shuddering gasp and tears began to pour down her face. "Harry-oh, Harry-I tried to tell you at b-breakfast, but I c-couldn't say it in front of Percy-it was me, Harry-but I-I s-swear I d-didn't mean to. R-Riddle made me, he t-took me over-and - how did you kill that-that thing? W-where's Riddle. The last thing I r-remember is him coming out of the diary-"

'Strangely,' thought Harry, his eyes on the young girl now clutching at his robes, 'I don't believe her.'

However, to keep suspicions down, Harry smiled and subtly pocketed the diary, realising that it could come in handy later.

"It's all right," said Harry, "Riddle's finished; it's why you're safely back with me: him and the basilisk. C'mon, Ginny, let's get out of here -"

"I'm going to be expelled!" Ginny wept as Harry helped her awkwardly to her feet. "I've looked forward to coming to Hogwarts ever since B-Bill came and n-now I'll have to leave and - w-what'll Mum and Dad say?"

Fawkes was waiting for them, hovering in the Chamber entrance; Harry urged Ginny forward; they stepped over the motionless coils of the dead basilisk, through the echoing gloom, and back into the tunnel.

Harry heard the stone doors close behind them with a soft hiss.

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Professor Dumbledore's Office:

For a moment there was silence as Harry, Ron, Ginny, and Lockhart stood in the doorway, covered in muck and slime and (in Harry's case) blood.

Then, as they opened the door to the headmaster's office, there was a scream.

"Ginny!"

It was Mrs. Weasley, who had been sitting crying in front of the fire. She leapt to her feet, closely followed by Mr. Weasley, and both of them flung themselves on their daughter.

Harry, however, was looking past them. Professor Dumbledore was standing by the mantelpiece, beaming, next to Professor McGonagall, who was taking great, steady gasps, clutching her chest.

Fawkes moved to the desk before them, not bothering to even recognise his old master, just as Harry found himself and Ron being swept into Mrs. Weasley's tight embrace. Just like when he had been around Ginny, Harry suddenly felt very sick, like there was a part of him, other than Tom's spirit, who distrusted the Weasleys. Or maybe it was simply because the one responsible for all his pain and suffering was standing not three steps away, those twinkling blue eyes trying to find some kind of expression in Harry's face.

"You saved her! You saved her! How did you do it?" asked Mrs. Weasley, looking at Harry with an earnest gleam in her eyes.

"I think we'd all like to know that," said Professor McGonagall weakly.

Mrs. Weasley let go of Harry, who hesitated for a moment, then walked over to the desk and laid upon it the Sorting Hat, before he stopped and lifted Gryffindor's Sword, much to the shock of Professor McGonagall, who asked, "Mr Potter, how in Godric's name did you get his sword?"

With a smile, Harry answered, "Take a seat, Professor: you'll be here a while."

Then he started telling them everything. For nearly a quarter of an hour he spoke into the rapt silence: He told them about hearing the disembodied voice, how Hermione had finally realized that he was hearing a basilisk in the pipes; how he and Ron had followed the spiders into the forest, that Aragog had told them where the last victim of the basilisk had died; how he had guessed that Moaning Myrtle had been the victim, and that the entrance to the Chamber of Secrets might be in her bathroom.

Very well," Professor McGonagall prompted him as he paused, "so you found out where the entrance was - breaking a hundred school rules into pieces along the way, I might add - but how on earth did you all get out of there alive, Potter?"

So Harry, his voice now growing hoarse from all this talking, told them about Fawkes's timely arrival and about the Sorting Hat giving him the sword. But then he faltered. He had so far avoided mentioning Riddle's diary - or Ginny. And he was going to ballet dance for Severus Snape before he revealed anything about his and Tom's talk to this lot.

Ginny was standing with her head against Mrs. Weasley's shoulder, and tears were still coursing silently down her cheeks. 'What if they expelled her?' Harry thought in panic. 'Riddle's diary didn't work anymore and I have it now, so how could they prove it had been he who'd made her do it all?'

Instinctively, Harry looked at Dumbledore, who smiled faintly, the firelight glancing off his half-moon spectacles; remembering Tom's

warning, Harry pulled his eyes away, before a laugh sounded in his mind, /Good memory,/ whispered Tom, /But you'll have to say something./

"What interests me most," said Dumbledore gently, "is how Lord Voldemort managed to enchant Ginny, when my sources tell me he is currently in hiding in the forests of Albania?"

"W- what's that?" said Mr. Weasley in a stunned voice. "YouKnow-Who. En-enchanted Ginny. But Ginny's not ... Ginny hasn't been ... has she?"

"I don't recall mentioning He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named, Headmaster," answered Harry rather calmly, before he added, "However, if it puts your minds at rest: It was this diary; Riddle wrote it when he was sixteen, but, when I destroyed the Basilisk, there was this clap of powerful magic and the diary was disintegrated."

/You little Slytherin,/ laughed Tom, glad he didn't have a true body...yet, as he added, /Your pocket Harry; there's a gift there./

Reaching into his pocket, Harry's hand closed around something round and metal; lifting it out, he kept on with his tale, "I found this where he had been and then Ginny woke before we made our way back here."

"May I?" asked Dumbledore, but Harry, who could now hear the tone of the old man clear as a bell, did the last thing he would have done in a different time: he put the ring on his finger and eyed it himself: it was a solid silver ring with two emerald and silver serpents coiled in the sign of infinity. Looking to the people present, Harry smiled as he felt a warm pulse course through his body.

"Mr Potter?" asked McGonagall, but Harry's answer was one that made only one member of that room's blood run colder than Snape's classroom:

"You, Professor, can call me Lord Slytherin!"

So, there we are then: finally, I put an idea that rages in my mind onto paper; remember that this is a test, so, if you think I should continue, then say so;

In the meantime, I write this as a normal story, so, what does Harry's new lordship mean for those who wish to use him?

Also, can Harry trust Tom or will he be forced to resort to desperate measures to keep the seemingly now ex-Dark Lord on the straight and narrow?

Keep Reading to Find Out;

Next Chapter: A talk with Dumbledore reveals some surprising twists for our young Lord; a Lord of a Family has an offer for the young Lord Slytherin and Tom gives Harry what he promised, but can Riddle be trusted to aid Harry and not use him?

Following Chapter: Inheritances and Summer Plans; plus, Harry discovers a more studious side to his personality and has a change of heart regarding his choices for 3rd year; plus, there's a letter for the Lord of Slytherin...FROM JAMES POTTER; and, to top it all off; Harry hears about a certain prisoner and makes his own plans for their meeting;

So, if you wish this story to continue, then please post a review if you liked this story; also, if I continue this story, I want to assure all who enjoy reading my fics that this will be different from my usual PowerfulHarry stories...

Chapter 2: A Lord's Gift

Dumbledore's Office:

Harry stood tall and proud, a stance that was really unlike him, as he stared at the witches and wizards in the room, each one of them looking at him in shock after his last declaration. Harry, meanwhile, looked down to his right hand where the ring of Salazar Slytherin was set comfortably over his ring finger, its emerald and silver serpent design glistening in the torchlight.

Finally, as if he had been snapped back to reality, Ron began to laugh, "Very funny mate; always a sense of humour: Lord Slytherin? You're a Gryffindor Harry; you'd never join those snakes."

"You're right," Harry agreed, looking ahead as he spoke, "I never would join those snakes, the key word being would; past tense, but soon, I will be hoping to repair my relationship with those snakes as you call them Ron. And, as I said, my name is Lord Slytherin, sole remaining Heir of Salazar Slytherin, rightful owner and master of the Chamber of Secrets and speaker of the Sacred Tongue. I bear my ancestor's ring, which, as I'm sure you know Headmaster," he added, turning now to Dumbledore, his eyes low, "Will not allow any but the true Heir of the House to bear it."

"Harry," Dumbledore addressed him with the same formality as he instructed, "Please stop this game; you are a Gryffindor and the son of Lily and James; you have no ties to Slytherin. The joke's over, so please, take off that ring and give it to me."

'Why? So you can manipulate the powers of Lord Slytherin like you manipulate me? Not a chance,' thought Harry, as he then felt the full force of Slytherin's magic passing through him. With a slow smile, Harry answered Dumbledore, "Sorry Professor, but the ring, and all its rights, are mine now: I, as a Parselmouth, am marked as Slytherin's Heir. At first, when I discovered this, I was scared, but now, I think I like the ring it has to it: Harry Potter, Lord of Slytherin House."

"In that case," Dumbledore smiled, "Keep the ring, Lord...Slytherin; it is, as you seem to say, your birthright, but please, let me help you understand this bond. As I said Harry, you were not born under the

banner of Salazar Slytherin; rather, I have a theory as to what has happened, but this is best left to a discussion alone."

"Of course Headmaster," replied Harry, everyone, including Harry himself, gasping with shock as to the slick tone of his voice. As Harry listened, he actually realised that he sounded an awful lot like Tom, but put it down to his new self. Tom said he could trust him, so Harry would give him the benefit of the doubt.

/Thank you Harry,/ the voice of the ex-Dark Lord spoke in his mind, but Harry merely replied mentally, giving a sense to Tom of understanding. He was, as he had just discovered, Lord Slytherin, so a few changes would happen.

Dumbledore was speaking again, clearly wanting to resume his conversation from before the Lord Slytherin revelation. "Of course, Tom was probably the most brilliant student Hogwarts has ever seen." He turned around to the Weasleys, who were looking utterly bewildered. "Very few people know that Lord Voldemort was once called Tom Riddle. I taught him myself, fifty years ago, at Hogwarts. He disappeared after leaving the school ... travelled far and wide ... sank so deeply into the Dark Arts, consorted with the very worst of our kind, underwent so many dangerous, magical transformations, that when he resurfaced as Lord Voldemort, he was barely recognizable. Hardly anyone connected Lord Voldemort with the clever, handsome boy who was once Head Boy here."

"But, Ginny," said Mrs. Weasley. "What's our Ginny got to do with - with - him?"

"His d-diary," Ginny sobbed. "I've b-been writing in it, and he's been w-writing back all year -"

"Ginny!" said Mr. Weasley, flabbergasted. "Haven't I taught you anything? What have I always told you? Never trust anything that can think for itself if you can't see where it keeps its brain. Why didn't you show the diary to me, or your mother? A suspicious object like that, it was clearly full of Dark Magic!"

"I d-didn't know," sobbed Ginny. "I found it inside one of the books Mum got me. I th-thought someone had just left it in there and forgotten about it -"

"Miss Weasley should go up to the hospital wing right away," Dumbledore interrupted in a firm voice. "This has been a terrible ordeal for her. There will be no punishment. Older and wiser wizards than she have been hoodwinked by Lord Voldemort." He strode over to the door and opened it. "Bed rest and perhaps a large, steaming mug of hot chocolate. I always find that cheers me up," he added, twinkling kindly down at her. "You will find that Madam Pomfrey is still awake. She's just giving out Mandrake juice - I daresay the basilisk's victims will be waking up any moment."

"So Hermione's okay!" said Ron brightly and even Harry felt a modicum of thanks as to her recovery, but a part of him, somewhere deep inside, suddenly stirred and wondered whether he would have the same feeling of treachery with Hermione like he had with the Weasleys.

"There has been no lasting harm done, Ginny," said Dumbledore. Mrs. Weasley led Ginny out, and Mr. Weasley followed, still looking deeply shaken. "You know, Minerva," Professor Dumbledore said thoughtfully to Professor McGonagall, "I think all this merits a good feast. Might I ask you to go and alert the kitchens?"

"Right," said Professor McGonagall crisply, also moving to the door. "I'll leave you to deal with Potter and Weasley, shall I?"

"Certainly," said Dumbledore, not noticing Harry's right hand suddenly clenching with a manner of concern.

She left, and Harry and Ron gazed uncertainly at Dumbledore. What exactly had Professor McGonagall meant, deal with them. Surely - surely - they weren't about to be punished.

"I seem to remember telling you both that I would have to expel you if you broke any more school rules," said Dumbledore. Ron opened his mouth in horror. "Which goes to show that the best of us must sometimes eat our words," Dumbledore went on, smiling. "You will both receive Special Awards for Services to the School and - let me see - yes, I think two hundred points apiece for Gryffindor." Ron went as brightly pink as Lockhart's valentine flowers and closed his mouth again.

"But one of us seems to be keeping mightily quiet about his part in this dangerous adventure," Dumbledore added. "Why so modest,

Gilderoy." Harry gave a start, before his eyes fell on the Obliviated professor; he had completely forgotten about Lockhart. He turned and saw that Lockhart was standing in a corner of the room, still wearing his vague smile. When Dumbledore addressed him, Lockhart looked over his shoulder to see who he was talking to.

"Professor Dumbledore," Ron said quickly, "there was an accident down in the Chamber of Secrets. Professor Lockhart -"

"Am I a professor." said Lockhart in mild surprise. "Goodness. I expect I was hopeless, was I?"

"He tried to do a Memory Charm and the wand backfired," Ron explained quietly to Dumbledore.

"Dear me," said Dumbledore, shaking his head, his long silver mustache quivering. "Impaled upon your own sword, Gilderoy!"

"Sword." said Lockhart dimly. "Haven't got a sword. That boy has, though." He pointed at Harry. "He'll lend you one."

"Would you mind taking Professor Lockhart up to the infirmary, too?" Dumbledore said to Ron. "I'd like a few more words with Harry."

Lockhart ambled out. Ron cast a curious look back at Dumbledore and Harry as he closed the door. Dumbledore crossed to one of the chairs by the fire.

"Sit down, Harry," he said, but Harry didn't move; something about the way Dumbledore had commented on Lockhart being impaled on his own sword set the warning bells ringing again; did the old man know about Lockhart's lack of knowledge? Was this just another notch on the belt worn by the manipulative puppet master?

Instead of obliging, Harry simply strode past Dumbledore and softly began stroking Fawkes' plumage, the phoenix giving a trill of thanks at the feeling of the boy's touch. Despite Harry's lack of obedience, Dumbledore continued, "First of all, Harry, I want to thank you," said Dumbledore, eyes twinkling again. "You must have shown me real loyalty down in the Chamber. Nothing but that could have called Fawkes to you."

"It wasn't loyalty Professor," Harry answered, the slick tones of voice rolling off his tongue; without turning, he asked, "Do you know why the Sword of Gryffindor came to me?"

"Only a true Gryffindor could have pulled that out of the hat, Harry," said Dumbledore simply, but Harry chose that moment to turn and stare at Dumbledore, his emerald eyes narrowed so that his focus was not on the old man's face.

"Wrong Headmaster," he replied, "You obviously don't know as much about Hogwarts and her magic as they say you do; the Sword of Gryffindor and Fawkes for that matter, both came to me because they both sensed I was in danger, because of who I am."

"Yes," nodded Dumbledore, "I daresay that Godric's spirit still lingers within his sword and..."

"Wrong again," Harry cut in, not even bothering to take into consideration that this was his Headmaster; looking back to Fawkes, Harry explained, "Tom said it to me before I destroyed him: he said: so this is what Dumbledore sends his saviour? An songbird and an old hat? But after that, he said to me that the sword only appeared to the true Heir of Godric Gryffindor, as does Fawkes: tell me sir, how long have you had Fawkes?"

'Slytherin and Gryffindor,' thought Dumbledore with shock, 'I have to try and get him on my side; for the Greater Good, it must be done.'

"I have had him since I was a mere Transfiguration teacher at this school," explained Dumbledore, but Harry, clearly knowing he was lying, began to chuckle to himself.

"Are you sure Headmaster? Because, as the Heir of Gryffindor, if Fawkes is mine, then that would mean he hatched on July 31st twelve years ago, on the same day that I was born."

Dumbledore then heard a low trilling coming from the phoenix, before, with a swoosh of his feathers, Fawkes flew from his makeshift perch and landed on Harry's shoulder. As Dumbledore watched, the sword of Gryffindor and the once-noble phoenix both began to glow with crimson light, the hilt of the sword then glowing with a brighter light than the sword or Fawkes.

As Harry and Dumbledore both watched this amazing feat of magic, the Slytherin ring also began to glow and, as their lights met, the hilt and ring seemed to fuse into one, creating a gold and silver woven ring that bore the emerald and silver snakes now wrapped in the infinite symbol around a blood-ruby encrusted lion.

Heaving a sigh, Harry scoffed as he remarked, "And it seems that the sentient powers of Fawkes and the sword agree with me; but, sir, there's one thing I don't understand."

"And what's that Harry?" asked Dumbledore, hoping that this doubt would help him put Harry where he belonged; fastened to his destiny.

"The Sorting Hat told me I'd have done well in Slytherin; and everyone thought I was Slytherin's heir for a while...because I can speak Parseltongue."

"You can speak Parseltongue, Harry," said Dumbledore calmly, "because Lord Voldemort - who is the last remaining ancestor of Salazar Slytherin - can speak Parseltongue. Unless I'm much mistaken, he transferred some of his own powers to you the night he gave you that scar. Not something he intended to do, I'm sure."

"Voldemort put a bit of himself in me." Harry gasped, a pretend thunderstruck expression on his face; this much he already knew, and could feel, thanks to Tom slowly unravelling the powers of the Horcrux.

"It certainly seems so."

"So I should be in Slytherin," Harry said, looking desperately into Dumbledore's face. "The Sorting Hat could see Slytherin's power in me, my power; it saw that I was the Heir and it -"

"Put you in Gryffindor," said Dumbledore calmly. "Listen to me, Harry; you happen to have many qualities Salazar Slytherin prized in his hand-picked students. His own very rare gift, Parseltongue - resourcefulness - determination - a certain disregard for rules," he added, his moustache quivering again. "Yet the Sorting Hat placed you in Gryffindor. You know why that was. Think."

"It only put me in Gryffindor," said Harry in a defeated voice, knowing the answer himself; an answer that made him feel ashamed of himself, "Because I asked not to go in Slytherin"

"Exactly," said Dumbledore, beaming once more. "This makes you very different from Tom Riddle. It is our choices, Harry, that show what we truly are, far more than our abilities."

"But why would I fear who I really am?" asked Harry, his emerald eyes now twinkling in the same manner as Dumbledore; he even heard the note of discomfort in the old man's answer.

"I wish I knew Harry," replied Dumbledore, "But think about it for a second; if you had become a Slytherin, then you and Mr Weasley would have been enemies; you would never have saved Miss Granger nor stopped Professor Quirrell."

/He doesn't know that,/ Tom remarked, and Harry felt a slow pang of anger at the man's insinuations.

"That may be," Harry nodded, before he adopted his prideful side as he added, "But Professor, as Lord of Slytherin, I can take a random guess and say that the friendship between Ron and I will be over come September; he can't trust Slytherins just like how you and Voldemort can never truly work together. So, if that's everything sir...then I'd like to go to my room."

Dumbledore nodded and pulled out a parchment and ink as he suggested, "What you need, Harry, is some food and sleep. I suggest you go down to the feast, while I write to Azkaban - we need our gamekeeper back. And I must draft an advertisement for the Daily Prophet, too," he added thoughtfully. "We'll need a new Defence Against the Dark Arts teacher... Dear me, we do seem to run through them, don't we."

Harry got up and crossed to the door. He had just reached for the handle, however, when the door burst open so violently that it bounced back off the wall.

Lucius Malfoy stood there, fury in his face. And cowering behind his legs, heavily wrapped in bandages, was Dobby.

"Good evening, Lucius," said Dumbledore pleasantly.

Mr. Malfoy almost knocked Harry over as he swept into the room; Dobby went scurrying in after him, crouching at the hem of his cloak, a look of abject terror on his face. The elf was carrying a stained rag with which he was attempting to finish cleaning Mr. Malfoy's shoes. Apparently Mr. Malfoy had set out in a great hurry, for not only were his shoes half-polished, but his usually sleek hair was dishevelled. Ignoring the elf bobbing apologetically around his ankles, he fixed his cold eyes upon Dumbledore.

"Dobby was working for the Malfoys all along," whispered Harry, aware of the small creature's cowering, "But why do what he did?"

/Perhaps this is your chance to find out Harry,/ suggested Tom, his voice full of thought as he added, /As well as repair some...old conflicts; I'm sure Mr Malfoy would be honoured to be a friend of Lord Slytherin. Especially since he always considered himself to be the next Heir: the Malfoys are descendants of Slytherin themselves, but they have never sired an heir./

"That must be like getting kicked in the head," sniggered Harry, his voice low with secrecy as he watched Lucius and Dumbledore carefully.

"So!" he said "You've come back. The governors suspended you, but you still saw fit to return to Hogwarts."

"Well, you see, Lucius," said Dumbledore, smiling serenely, "the other eleven governors contacted me today. It was something like being caught in a hailstorm of owls, to tell the truth. They'd heard that Arthur Weasleys daughter had been killed and wanted me back here at once. They seemed to think I was the best man for the job after all. Very strange tales they told me, too; several of them seemed to think that you had threatened to curse their families if they didn't agree to suspend me in the first place." Mr. Malfoy went even paler than usual, but his eyes were still slits of fury.

"So - have you stopped the attacks yet." he sneered. "Have you caught the culprit?"

"We have," said Dumbledore, with a smile.

"Well." said Mr. Malfoy sharply. "Who is it?"

"The same person as last time, Lucius," said Dumbledore. "But this time, Lord Voldemort was acting through somebody else by means of very dark magic; I'm sure our young Mr Potter here can explain it."

"If Lord Malfoy wishes to hear it," Harry nodded, giving Lucius a curt bow of his head, "Then I will gladly oblige; well sir?" As he diverted his attention to the elder Malfoy, Harry made sure that his familial Lord's ring flashed in the light.

Seeing the ring, Lucius went pale again, before he took a deep breath and suggested, "Mr Potter, could we continue our...talk in private? I'm sure we can both benefit from being able to speak alone without any..." Harry noticed him eyeing Dumbledore as he added, "...outside interference."

"Indeed," commented Dumbledore, "And imagine, what might have happened when people discovered that the victim in all this was none other than Arthur Weasley's daughter; the Weasleys are one of our most prominent pure-blood families. Imagine the effect on Arthur Weasley and his Muggle Protection Act, if his own daughter was discovered attacking and killing Muggle-borns!"

"A terrible notion indeed," Lucius remarked, Harry trying not to smile as he found a small similarity in the speaking tones between Lucius Malfoy and Severus Snape: both talking in low, almost monotone voices that sounded like they had their teeth clenched. "And how then," Lucius continued, "Does a Weasley get a hold of a Dark Item?"

"Maybe in the raid on your home sir," suggested Harry, looking to Dobby, who was watching Harry carefully, "The Weasleys would do anything to usurp your good name; all it would take is one innocently placed item; with the Malfoys under investigation, the Weasleys could consider themselves the true voice of the wizarding world. Imagine how much chaos that would cause in the Ministry; things would never be the same for any wizard kind."

"True Mr Potter," nodded Lucius, a part of him wondering how the boy knew about the raid on the Manor; looking back to Dumbledore, he then continued, "Good day Dumbledore; we're going, Dobby!" He

wrenched open the door and as the elf came hurrying up to him, he kicked him right through it. They could hear Dobby squealing with pain all the way along the corridor.

Sharing a look with Dumbledore, Harry shook his head as he spoke up, "By the right bestowed to the Lord of Gryffindor; I claim his sword sir; it is mine by birthright and by conquest; the Chamber, Professor, will remain open, but you need not worry about the Basilisk and, as a final note, I also claim what I suppose to be my familiar."

He held out his arm and watched as Fawkes flew from his perch and landed on Harry's arm, before the young Lord gave a nod and pursued Mr Malfoy, the Sword of Gryffindor now tied to his back by a noble golden scabbard that had been formed in the aftermath of Harry's anointing as Lord Gryffindor, the scabbard bearing the images of a snake-lion hybrid, which Harry learned later was named a Chimera.

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Hogwarts Exterior:

"An eventful day indeed Mr Potter," Lucius spoke up when Harry had caught up with him, "Now, away from prying eyes and ears, would you care to tell me the truth as to how this happened?"

"Certainly Lord Malfoy," replied Harry, before he reached into his robe and withdrew the diary; presenting it to Lucius, Harry spoke up, "I know that this used to belong to Voldemort, or as he was known, Tom Riddle: the diary is an item that I am willing to bet he entrusted you to keep safe: an item known as a Horcrux."

Lucius looked around with fear as he asked, "Who else knows of this existence?"

"No-one sir," answered Harry, pocketing the diary, "Now, it's just a diary, but I have it on good authority that one of us is in deep trouble. However, sir, I know why you really wish to speak to me." He lifted his right hand and revealed the snake-bound lion on his ring as he added, "You noticed the ring that I bore back in Dumbledore's office, didn't you sir?"

"The sign of Lord Slytherin," nodded Lucius, "And the ruby lion is the sign of Lord Gryffindor," he then gave an amused chuckle as he added, "Ironical that Slytherin's new Heir is you, Mr Potter, but, as I am able to see from your body language, I am guessing there is something you wish to do."

Harry nodded as he then indicated the cowering creature at Lucius' side; with determination in his voice, Harry explained, "Three times this year, sir, I was the victim of magical sabotage: two of those times, I was visited by a certain creature you own Mr Malfoy."

"What?" asked Lucius coldly, before he too looked at Dobby and asked, "What happened in those times Mr Potter?"

"The first time," answered Harry, a part of him not sorry for what was about to happen, "Involved a Hover Charm that was not cast by me, thus resulting in a letter from Madam Hopkirk, as an official warning against underage magic; the second time, the barrier between Platform 9 and 10 was blocked off, nearly resulting in my expulsion from Hogwarts and then, the third time involved a rogue bludger, which could have taken my head off, but instead resulted in me breaking my arm. Like I told you Mr Malfoy, two of those times, I was visited by a certain creature and, ever since I saw him with you sir, I began to wonder."

"I see," Lucius replied, looking again to Dobby as he added, "Mr Potter...Lord Gryffindor-Slytherin, I have never sent this creature to harm or stop you from attending Hogwarts in any way; I apologise for what has happened to you and, as compensation for wizarding damages, I, Lord Lucius Abraxas Malfoy, do request that you accept the foul creature as your own elf."

"Lord Malfoy," Harry then looked from the elder Malfoy to Dobby, before he gave a sly wink to Dobby as he added, "I think that payment would suffice; your House Elf seems to idolise me enough for me to know that he will do my bidding. I thank you and hope that, in years to come, our two families, and Heirs therein, can look forward to a long and fruitful friendship."

"As do I, Lord Potter," nodded Lucius, before he held out his long cane and, as Harry watched, Lucius Malfoy withdrew a wand from the head of the cane. Obviously not sorry to lose the creature, he then pressed his wand to Dobby and decreed, "As Lord of the Noble

and Ancient House of Malfoy, I, Lucius Malfoy, do hereby relinquish ownership of the House Elf Dobby to Lord Harry Gryffindor-Slytherin Potter; so mote it be."

Harry, looking to Dobby, gave a cough as he replied, "I, Lord Harry James Gryffindor-Slytherin-Potter, accept the gift of Dobby from Lord Lucius Malfoy: so mote it be."

There was a pulse of magic that passed between the two wizards as Dobby's filthy rag was changed into a small black robe bearing a crimson lion holding a golden letter G, as well as the Infinite Serpents coiled around an emerald letter S. The third crest was a phoenix with a bolt of lightning on its chest shaped like a letter P.

"Thank you Lord Malfoy," Harry smiled, before he added, "I hope we meet again sir."

"Good day Lord Potter," replied Lucius, before the edge of his lips twitched into a smile as he added, "I have a feeling that, one day this summer, our two families will cross paths again; until then, farewell."

With that, he walked to the edge of the Forbidden Forest and vanished with a crack; at the same time, Harry turned and kneeled down, noticing Dobby cowering in his presence. Shaking his head, Harry began laughing as he asked, "Dobby, why didn't you just tell me the truth? I would have listened: obviously you knew about the Chamber and my ability as a Parselmouth, so why keep it a secret?"

"Dobby is sorry Master Harry sir," replied the elf, "Shall Dobby punish himself sir?"

"No!" gasped Harry suddenly, his eyes sparkling as he explained, "Dobby, I don't ever want you to punish yourself; in a manner of speaking, if I hadn't broken my arm, then I would not have heard about the Chamber being opened before; if you had not used magic with my Muggle relatives, then I would not have been freed from that place. As your new Master, Dobby, I'm not happy with what you did, but, in a very crazy sense, I understand why you did it; now, I have an order for you."

"Of course Master Harry sir," Dobby wept, tears in his eyes at Harry's act of kindness, "Dobby is loyal to Master Harry Potter."

"I want you to work here," explained Harry, "In school time; at Hogwarts; over the holidays, be they summer or Christmas, you are free to do what you want Dobby, but, when I need you, I expect you to answer my call."

"Yes Master Harry sir," Dobby answered, "Dobby is grateful to Master Harry sir."

"Good," Harry replied, and he couldn't help but smile at Dobby as he added, "Now, since we're nearing the end of the year, I want you to go and get yourself fixed up Dobby; you have strong magic, I can feel it, so I want you to be fighting fit; now, leave me."

Dobby vanished with a crack and Harry, slowly making his way back to the school, laughed and shook his head.

/What's so funny?/ asked Tom, /You now have eyes in Hogwarts./

"I know," Harry answered, making a note to practise speaking to Tom in his mind, "And that's what's so funny; I now hold all the cards and, try as he might, Dumbledore can't do anything about it. Which reminds me, Tom, since you're currently within me, how would you like to help me make some new allies?"

/How?/ asked Tom, before it was his turn to hear an unexpected answer from the new Lord of Gryffindor and Slytherin.

"Let's just say that I think it's time for the Dark Lord to return to the world, but not how they think he will."

And, after a HIGH input from all my reviewers, I have decided to keep this going; thanks to everyone who reviewed, alerted, and favourite this story;

Now though, what does Harry mean for the Dark Lord to return?

And, just what will Lucius do if, and when, he figures out what else has happened with our young Lord?

Keep Reading to Find Out;

Next Chapter: Tom gives Harry what he promised, but can Riddle be trusted to aid Harry and not use him? Also, Inheritances and Summer Plans; plus, Harry discovers a more studious side to his personality and has a change of heart regarding his choices for 3rd year; plus, there's a letter for the Lord of Slytherin...FROM JAMES POTTER; and, to top it all off; Harry hears about a certain prisoner and makes his own plans for their meeting;

Following Chapter: Summer pt 2 and Harry meets up with some old friends and deals with some old conflicts; plus, following James' letter, Harry has a few choice words for his so-called best friend and none of them are friendly; also, the end of summer brings a meeting for Harry from an old family friend and, to top it all off, there are Dementors on the Hogwarts Express and Tom speaks with Harry about what comes next;

Please Read and Review...

Chapter 3: A Dursley-Free Summer

Hogwarts School: Great Hall

Harry had been to several Hogwarts feasts, but never one quite like this. Everybody was in their pyjamas, and the celebration lasted all night. Harry didn't know whether the best bit was Hermione running toward him, screaming "You solved it! You solved it!" or Justin hurrying over from the Hufflepuff table to wring his hand and apologize endlessly for suspecting him, which Harry calmly added that he was right to apologise – even though he was the Heir of Slytherin.

Other highlights for Harry included Hagrid turning up at half past three, cuffing Harry and Ron so hard on the shoulders that they were knocked into their plates of trifle; his and Ron's four hundred points for Gryffindor securing the House Cup for the second year running, which Harry found a bit unfair and somehow managed to avoid Ron for the night; Professor McGonagall standing up to tell them all that the exams had been cancelled as a school treat, to which Hermione was distraught.

However, Harry made a note that his favourite moment was Dumbledore announcing that, unfortunately, Professor Lockhart would be unable to return next year, owing to the fact that he needed to go away and get his memory back. Quite a few of the teachers joined in the cheering that greeted this news.

"Shame," said Ron, helping himself to a jam doughnut. "He was starting to grow on me."

As the night-time feast progressed, Harry's hand kept shifting to a secluded pocket under his robe where the shrunken – with a little help from Tom – Sword of Gryffindor was waiting patiently. He didn't trust anyone, not even Ron, to reveal his heritage, but, through some miracle, the red-headed Gryffindor managed to keep his mouth shut.

The rest of the final term passed in a haze of blazing sunshine; Hogwarts was back to normal with only a few, small differences - Defence Against the Dark Arts classes were cancelled and Harry, through what little time he had left as a second year, began to revise and research his studies, much to Ron's chagrin and Hermione's

pleasure. The reason he was researching, however, was because of the new side of his magic that had been unlocked by Tom, the ex-Dark Lord giving Harry what he had promised, which was full, unrestricted access to the part of him that had once been the Horcrux.

Over that time, the young Slytherin didn't rear his head; instead, he chose to stay within Harry's subconscious, explaining that he would resurface when Harry told him it was safe, so, in the meantime, Tom shared what knowledge he had regained from the two Horcruxes with the Heir of Slytherin. In particular, his knowledge about Potions and Defensive Magic, which Harry was more than welcome to shove in the face of Professor Snape when they were given an end of term assignment to craft a Forgetfulness Potion. To Harry's, and Severus' combined surprise, the Heir of Slytherin achieved full marks; his potion even beat Hermione, who admitted to those who would listen, including Harry that it was about time that the young Gryffindor began to take his work seriously.

Also, before he forgot, Harry began to research into his traits and talents and found that, like his Mother, he possessed a knack for Charms and the advanced side of magic while he got his Transfiguration and Flying skills from his Father. Before the end of term, Harry approached Professor McGonagall and dropped Divination for Ancient Runes, but still kept Care of Magical Creatures and, when he saw it as an option, also noted Private Lessons and informed Professor McGonagall that he wished to follow his parents' talents.

This news made the Head of Gryffindor very happy, but, when she asked Harry what lessons he wished for Private Studies, her face fell when he replied, "Potions and Charms; no doubt as I am the You-Know-What of You-Know-Who's House, I feel that they would come in very handy."

Too soon, it was time for the journey home on the Hogwarts Express, but, unlike previous journeys, Harry managed to avoid sitting with Ron or Ginny, his distrust in the Weasleys resurfacing from his encounter with Dumbledore, and instead chose to sit with Neville and Hermione, who sounded surprised when he explained about the change in electives.

"Harry?" asked Hermione, halfway through the journey, "You will be okay this year, won't you? I mean, after the Chamber and what happened with Ginny?"

"Don't worry about me Hermione," smiled Harry, before he raised his wand and cast a Locking Charm on the door; lowering his wand again, he asked, "We've been friends for two years now Hermione, and you Neville, so I want to know if I have your trust?"

"Despite what you did in our first year; yes, you have my trust Harry," Neville remarked, before Hermione spoke up.

"I owe you for saving me from the troll and figuring out the Basilisk, so, yes Harry; you have my trust." With a slow smile, she then watched as Harry pulled a miniature item from his pocket. Looking to his two dorm-mates, Harry then realised that he had never really gotten to know Neville; anything he knew was from what he saw in Potions and from rumours.

Making a note to change that, Harry then looked at the item and hissed, 'Grow,' the word of Parselmouth rolling off his tongue like he'd been speaking it all his life. As Hermione gasped and Neville stared in awe at the sound of Slytherin's tongue, Harry held out his palm flat and watched as the Sword of Godric Gryffindor enlarged onto his palm, its silver-edged blade gleaming in the light.

"Harry," gasped Hermione, "Is...that...what I...think it is?"

"It is," replied Harry, smiling at her disbelief, "This sword is the Sword of Gryffindor; the symbol of Gryffindor's courage and strength and, as I am holding it, I guess that makes me..."

"Lord of Gryffindor's Family," Neville remarked, his voice calm despite the treasure before him. Hermione turned to him in shock, before Neville added, "What? Did you think the dense Gryffindor didn't know his history? What memories I have about my Mum and Dad involve them talking about a lot of magic; I don't recall those memories out loud because of how precious they are to me, but one of their talks speak of the Four Families: Godric Gryffindor, Salazar Slytherin, Rowena Ravenclaw and Helga Hufflepuff. Each family has its own sign of Lord or Ladyship and, impossible as it may seem for you Harry, you actually bear two signs: Godric's Sword and Salazar's Tongue, which makes you Lord Slytherin-Gryffindor."

"Oh that," laughed Harry, shrinking the sword once again, "Yes, I actually did know that; when the Sword came to me, something happened and I was revealed, and anointed, as Slytherin's Heir."

"What are the other signs?" asked Hermione, watching as Harry pocketed the sword and leaned back in his chair.

"Well," replied Neville, "Rowena Ravenclaw was a natural bookworm, so her sign was a tome, which contains all her knowledge and can only be read by her Heir; Helga, on the other hand, preferred the forces of nature, so, instead of something physical, she shares Salazar's knack and her sign is a magical ability: Terra-Weaving, which means that a witch or wizard can, literally, hear the voice of nature in their mind, just like how Parselmouths can hear serpent-tongue while anyone else simply hears hissing. Weaving can also allow the witch or wizard to control the elemental power of Forest, a rare element that hasn't been seen in over 150 years."

After his explanation, Neville fell silent as he looked to Harry and Hermione, his eyes dark as he asked, "Can you not tell anyone that I just act this way to keep my memories?"

"We won't tell Neville," Harry informed him, "However, you shouldn't have to hide your talents; as of September, I'm certainly not going to, so you shouldn't hide who or what you are. You're a very talented wizard Neville and, even though people may see you differently because of it, you shouldn't be afraid to use those talents."

"But that's just it Harry," Neville exclaimed, "It's easy for you, because you're the Boy-Who-Lived; but me? I'm a no-one; I've heard people saying I should never have been a wizard and that includes what Malfoy says about me: no-one cares what talents you have because they see it as another weapon against You-Know-Who."

"Well as true as that may be," agreed Harry, "You are a Gryffindor; if the Sorting Hat hadn't seen potential, then you'd have been a Hufflepuff; I mean, as you say Neville, look at me: did you know the hat wanted to put me into Slytherin?"

"Really?"

Hermione was stunned at this revelation; Harry? A Slytherin? Lord Slytherin, she could understand, but to be in the same House as Malfoy?

"Yes," nodded Harry, "But, according to Professor Dumbledore, it was because of my ties to Voldemort that nearly put me there; however, he also said that it was our choices that show what we truly are and not our abilities."

"Then he's lying to you!" gasped Hermione, "As Lord Slytherin, it makes sense that the hat would want you to go to your House, but, when you chose not to, it decided on your second House: Lord of Gryffindor."

"Hermione's right," Neville added, "And so are you Harry; I shouldn't have to hide my talents, but how can I do that in such short time?"

"Well," Harry answered, a sly, calculating look in his eyes, "If you wanted, you could spend the summer with me; I don't plan on going back to my relatives for long; instead, I'm going to Gringotts to find out what I own as Lord of Gryffindor and Slytherin. As their Heir, and the last of my family, I officially gain financial ownership while naming a guardian to watch over my assets."

/You're welcome,/ laughed Tom, who had informed Harry of the loophole in gaining a wizard's inheritance; it was how he, before becoming Voldemort, had gained control over his house: Riddle Manor and the finances of his family.

With a sigh, Hermione nodded and addressed Harry, "Ever since you saved me Harry, I always believed that you had the right to live as you wanted; without that right, you would remain weak and would have been unable to get through the challenges we've faced."

"I agree," Neville smiled, "You shouldn't have to stay somewhere that you don't like going to."

"I mean," continued Hermione, "You said it yourself last summer: you weren't going home, not really; that was how I figured out how much you didn't like where you were." Then, as if the idea had suddenly hit her, Hermione gasped and exclaimed, "Why not spend the summer with my family? I could help you figure out any

problems you may have with your heritage and, with my family, you could study without having others breathing down your neck."

'Typical Hermione,' thought Harry, a smile creeping onto his face, 'Anything she says always goes back to studying and being a team; maybe that's why she's one of the few I do trust.'

/Could be,/ Tom agreed, but Harry then sensed an amused note in his voice.

Shaking his head, Harry nodded at Hermione, "If your parents don't mind, then I would be glad to stay with you Hermione; at least I'd be able to talk about Hogwarts without being called anything unnatural."

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King's Cross Station:

When the Hogwarts Express reached Platform 9 $\frac{3}{4}$, Harry and Hermione both made for the barrier while Neville, after promising to write over the summer, left with his grandmother. As they walked through the barrier, a high-pitched voice called his name, but Harry ignored it, his eyes cold as he continued to suspect the Weasleys of foul play.

Seeing Uncle Vernon standing there, Harry heaved a sigh as he whispered, "Wait here; I won't be long."

Walking over to his Muggle relatives, Harry then smiled and added, "Hi Uncle; sorry for being late."

"Get in the car boy," snarled Vernon Dursley, "We have to get moving so you can clean the place for Marge's visit."

"No!" the tone was firm, but Harry didn't flinch as he met his Uncle's eyes, his own emerald eyes now blazing with untapped potential. Keeping his true self out, Harry continued, "I am spending the summer with a friend, dear Uncle and, should you try and stop me, I'm sure that a well-timed spell could deal with you."

"Who the fuck do you think you are freak?" asked Vernon Dursley, his piggy eyes narrowed dangerously, "Don't think you can just tell

me no: I have placed a roof over your head, put food on the table and given you Dudley's second bedroom..."

"All out of the goodness of your heart," finished Harry, "I've heard this song before Uncle, but, as I said, I will not be coming with you; in fact, from this year, I will never be going back to that hell-hole where I am nothing more than shit on your shoes."

"Come with me you..."

Harry acted quickly, pulling the sword of Gryffindor from his pocket, he un-shrunk the weapon and removed it from its scabbard, holding it inches from Vernon's face; seeing the weapon being wielded so easily by his nephew, Uncle Vernon went white with fear: this wasn't what those freaks called a wand, so the boy could use this and, when he had spoken, it had been in a tone not human.

Harry, meanwhile, asked, "How do you like your hair to be cut Uncle? I admit that I'm no barber, but I can still use this," he brandished the sword, holding it against Vernon threateningly, "Pretty easily; now, I am leaving: I am not coming back and, if any witch or wizards come to the House, tell them this: Lord Slytherin sends his regards."

With that, Harry sheathed the sword and turned to walk back over to where Hermione was waiting; with a smile, he asked, "So, where's your Mum and Dad?"

"O-over here," Hermione answered, indicating a pair of Muggles who were standing out of the way; as they walked away from Vernon, Hermione asked, "Harry, why did he try and hurt you?"

"Hurt me," laughed Harry, "Hermione; compared to what he normally does, the fat man's actions there were a summer breeze."

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Granger Residence:

When Harry first met Hermione's parents, he had to admit that, like most people did with him, he saw a resemblance between Hermione and her parents: her mother, who insisted to Harry that she be called by her name, was known as Rachel Granger and had

Hermione's bushy hair and close to nice-looking appearance. Her Father, Jason Granger, who gave Harry the same insistence as his wife, had Hermione's brown eyes and, to Harry at least, also possessed her penchant for knowledge. Even though they were dentists, Jason had actually done a course in Childcare and Dramatics at Oxford – yes, Oxford – while Rachel had attended a regular university and achieved a grade in Medical Studies and Health and Social Care.

The Granger's home was certainly not what Harry expected: unlike Privet Drive, the Grangers lived in a detached house in Great Yarmouth and, to his immediate surprise; he found that Hermione had convinced her parents to purchase a House Elf. This, he had to remind himself, was Hermione; who saw most creatures as friendly and, when he had talked about Dobby, had been upset at how he punished himself.

Harry was shown to a guest room by Rachel, who told him that he didn't have to worry about studying around them or talking about Hogwarts, but, she was very insistent on seeing Harry tone up over the summer, a small conversation about his health that, after a few minutes, had Harry apologising to Hermione as she had heard everything.

Rachel Granger didn't have Hermione's eyes or real thirst for knowledge, but she did have her kindness; she was as tall as Aunt Petunia, albeit a lot more muscle and less looking like a horse. With warm blue eyes that made Harry think of the ocean, Mrs Granger was a real example of kindness to him, especially when it came to him having fun.

Jason Granger, on the other hand, had Hermione's stubbornness; as tall as Mr Weasley, the seemingly older of the Granger elders had short-cut black hair and Hermione's brown hair and he always tried, whenever he could, to ensure that Harry was speaking his mind. Every time Harry had a look in his eyes, Mr Granger would ask, "What's the headline Harry?" and Harry, after much coaxing, had no real choice, but to answer.

However, after just one week with the Grangers, Harry was sure of one thing: if he asked to come back and see them, then they wouldn't mind and, for the first time in his life, Harry realised that neither would he. He no longer had to struggle through his

homework; instead, he had Hermione – and, in a manner of speaking, Tom – helping him solve most of the puzzles surrounding his summer assignments and, when he was done with one piece, Hermione no longer breathed down his neck about getting it right; instead, she simply remarked, "I'm sure you did the best you can Harry; I can't ask anything more of a Lord."

As Harry's 13th birthday came around, the young Lord also began to speak more often with Tom; excusing himself from the Grangers company, Harry would explain that he was off to meditate – after Hermione had given him a book on the topic – and, through either Parselmouth or, after a great deal of studying, actually speaking through their mind link, both Harry and Tom would talk more like old friends. Tom, as Harry had learned during one conversation, was waiting for Harry to turn 13 before he relinquished the young Lord of his presence; when Harry asked why this was, Tom's cryptic answer was simply, "You'll see."

On the morning of his 13th birthday, Harry awoke and dressed in a full white and blue tracksuit emblazoned with the lion and snake from his heritage, his hair combed to a slick style as he made his way downstairs. The clothes, he had discovered before, were a gift from the Grangers as a means of helping him tone up and, indeed, in such a short space of time, Harry had changed drastically.

What once had been a short, scrawny, malnourished boy was now a medium height, lanky yet athletically toned teenager, his black hair always slick and running down to just below his neckline while his eyes, after an especially kind gesture from Jason, were now fully healed and his emerald glare always looked like it was full of power.

Opening the door to the Granger's living room, Harry was then bowled over when Hermione, in a seemingly excited manner, wrapped her arms around him and declared, "Happy birthday Harry!"

"Thanks 'Mione," replied Harry, noticing Hermione look shyly away at the use of her seemingly new nickname; looking around the room, Harry was then surprised to notice a small pile of birthday presents as well as a familiar House Elf holding several cards. With a smile, Harry asked, "I thought I told you to take the summer off Dobby?"

"Dobby is sorry Master Harry sir," squealed the Elf, "But Dobby would not miss Master Harry's birthday for all the punishments in the world; Dobby has cards from Harry Potter's friends sir."

Taking the cards, Harry's eyes narrowed with hatred as he noticed two cards in particular; one was written in a loopy, almost unrecognisable scrawl that belonged to Dumbledore while the other had the Weasleys seemingly hurried script. With a snarl that would have put even Snape to shame, Harry threw the letters in the air and, with a fluid motion, summoned Godric's Sword to his hand before slicing the cards and whatever was within them into ribbons.

Looking to the other cards, Harry was surprised to find a neatened scrawl as well as a familiar crest that he recognised as that of Lucius Malfoy while the other cards were from Neville, Hagrid and, to Harry's deepened pleasure, a rather special card from Hermione and her family.

Taking a seat, Harry opened Lord Malfoy's letter first; what he read within made him thankful that he had done so:

To the honoured Lord Gryffindor-Slytherin;

I, Lord Lucius Abraxas Salazar Malfoy do wish to extend my congratulations on this auspicious occasion; a child becoming a teenager is rather like a rite of passage. There will be things happening to you that you cannot understand, both physically and magically; as Lord of Malfoy, I hereby wish to offer a proposition of friendship that will benefit both our Houses.

I would be honoured to receive an audience with you within the next week; when and where is up to you, but this is an open invitation. Once this meeting is over, you will, it is my hope, understand what makes you so unique, my Lord.

If you could answer my invite, I will make the arrangements;

Once again, Happy Birthday Lord Harry Slytherin

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Raising his eyebrows with surprise, Harry placed the letter, or card, aside and looked to Dobby, "Inform Lord Malfoy that I will meet with

him this afternoon at Florean Fortescue's Ice Cream Parlour after my appointment with Gringotts!"

"Yes Master Harry," Dobby bowed once and vanished with a crack, leaving Harry to open the remainder of his cards; in Hagrid's card was a notice saying that his present would help Harry in the next year; Neville had written saying that he could meet Harry in Diagon Alley for their first official talk as to his new way of learning. As he read this card, Harry remembered when he had written to the young Longbottom about this tuition and, as he turned to his presents, Harry then recalled one other thing that he had said he would do on this day.

From Hermione, he received a set of books regarding Advanced Magic such as Charms and Potions; from her parents, Harry was actually grateful for his present: they had given him, obviously with help from Hermione, a set of emerald green and midnight blue robes that were inscribed with the Chimera on the Crest, the majestic beast holding onto a bolt of crimson lightning.

When Harry opened Hagrid's present, he found that it was a book entitled The Monster Book of Monsters, but, before he could inspect the inside pages, the book seemed to quiver before it snapped at his fingers.

Dropping the book, Harry did the first thing he could; reaching into his magic, an effect that made his eyes shimmer with magic, Harry whispered in Parselenic, 'Be still!'

The Grangers, save Hermione, were all stunned to hear Harry speaking Parseltongue, but, as he had hoped, the Heir of Slytherin smiled with pride as he watched the book quiver once more before lying still.

/You know,/ laughed Tom, /All you had to do was stroke the spine!/'

/And you didn't inform me of this why?/' asked Harry, but all he got in reply was an amused chuckle from the ex-Dark Lord.

Opening his other presents, Harry found that the Weasleys had given him the usual toffee and jumper, which Harry ordered Dobby to burn when the elf returned. From Neville, however, Harry received a rather unusual present; at first, it looked like a silver-petal rose

which also had a strange ivy vine crawling around its leaves and stem. When he sniffed the rose, Harry was surprised to find that it seemed to smell like the ocean breeze; reading Neville's note, Harry laughed afterwards:

Harry,

I hope you don't think me sappy for buying this for you; it's known as a Dream-Spinner Rose and is used in the love potion known as Amortentia: its scent, unlike the potion, is meant to be whatever the plant's magic feels will calm its owner. Since you have a bit more on your back than most witches and wizards, I thought it appropriate.

Can't wait to see you and Hermione in Diagon Alley;

Neville

PS: Did you hear? Ron's brother Percy was made Head Boy; that git won't let us hear the end of it.

'He certainly won't Neville,' thought Harry, placing the Dream-Spinner next to his other presents, before he looked to the last on the pile: it was written in a very looped scrawl and, when Harry felt its weight, he was confused as he found it to be a newspaper.

Without reading the enclosed card, Harry gently opened the parcel and watched as the Daily Prophet fell out, accompanied by what looked like an old kettle.

On the front of the newspaper was an image of a seemingly crazed man with dark eyes and scraggly hair; as the other members of the picture tried to restrain him, the man was emitting a long, silent scream that would obviously sound like someone being tortured. Above the picture was a bold headline:

MASS MURDERER BREAKS OUT OF AZKABAN

"That's Sirius Black," whispered Hermione, watching as Harry seemed to inspect the picture, "He supposedly killed 13 Muggles as well as a wizard with a single blow; they say he served You-Know-Who in the old days."

/Lies,/ hissed Tom, obviously sensing Harry's growing emotions, /Black did not serve my future self in the old days; from what I see in the Horcrux, he had no real master, save one little boy./

/Me,/ Harry agreed, looking to the picture as he then asked, /But why would he kill? And why does that old bastard send this to me?/

/I don't know Harry,/ Tom answered, /I really don't know./

Looking to Hermione, Harry indicated the letter and mumbled, "Can you read it for me?"

Hermione nodded; picking up the letter, she sounded as angry and stressed as he felt, her voice almost forced as she recited, "Dearest Harry; if you have seen the paper then you will understand why returning to your relatives is for the Greater Good. Sirius Black is a dangerous man and wants nothing more than to see you dead; the kettle enclosed with this letter is a Portkey that will return you to Privet Drive. Do the right thing for everyone Harry, especially for yourself, Yours Sincerely, Albus Dumbledore!"

As she finished the letter, Hermione watched as her parents gave a cry; looking to Harry, she saw why: his body was glowing with a powerful emerald aura that began to creep over his skin and entwine itself with the paper. At the same time, his emerald eyes seemed to mix their colour with a cold, evil shade of gold that made it look like emerald flames were burning in his eyes. Before Hermione could say another word, however, Harry let out a scream and, to everyone's shock and horror, incinerated the paper and melted the kettle into nothing with nothing more than a powerful burst of wandless magic, his eyes still full of cold fire.

With his aura still glowing, Harry then rose from his chair and, looking to the Grangers, nodded with respect, "You have been so welcoming to me over the past few weeks; I hope that, someday soon, I can return the favour; for now, I need to go!"

"Where will you go Harry?" asked Hermione, watching as the young wizard sheathed his sword and placed it over his shoulder.

"The Alleys," Harry replied, "I will see you on September First, Hermione."

As he reached the door, however, Hermione then spoke in a pleading voice, "Harry...wait..." she then looked to her parents and continued, "He'll need a friend; please understand."

"We do Hermione," Jason smiled, proud of the courage his little girl was displaying, even in light of the magic that was being shown before her.

"Go with Harry," Rachel added, nodding to the door, "He needs you more than we do; tell him that, if he ever needs a place to stay, our door is always open."

"Mum, Dad," wept Hermione, hugging her parents and turning to the door, where she was surprised to find Harry, still glowing, his hand held out to her.

"If you come down my path," he explained, his voice cold and cryptic, "There is no turning back; You will have to walk where I walk and learn as I learn; you will only be able to trust those whom I trust and never stray from the path I take; are you prepared to do that Hermione?"

"Yes," she answered, taking his hand, her eyes widening with shock as they both vanished from the front door of the Granger's House, leaving only their things, which were later collected by Dobby.

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Diagon Alley:

"Harry!" gasped Hermione when they stopped spinning, "Did we just...Apparate?"

"Yes," answered the young Lord, "And I can do so much more than that Hermione: I will tell you everything you want to know, but, before we do that, I have to get to Gringotts: Dobby!"

The House Elf appeared in a crack; bowing to Harry, he asked, "What can Dobby do for Master Harry and Miss Mione?"

"Go to the Leaky Cauldron," instructed Harry, "Book a double room for Hermione and I; once that is done, tell Tom that it is to be listed

for me; I have a sneaking suspicion he won't ask any more questions."

Dobby bowed and left with another crack; looking to her friend, Hermione asked, "Why won't Tom say anything Harry?"

"Would you stand in the way of the Boy-Who-Lived if he didn't want anyone to know?" asked Harry, leaving it at that.

Making their way to Gringotts, Harry then slowly withdrew the blade of Gryffindor, his emerald eyes still shining, his aura now faded once again; stepping through the doors, Harry smiled as he spotted a familiar goblin, "Griphook: good morning."

The same goblin that had served him two summers before bowed with respect when he saw who had addressed him, "Mr Potter, it is an honour that you remember my name sir; how can I be of assistance?"

"I need to speak to someone high up about releasing two particular vaults," explained Harry, before he raised the sword he was holding and added, "And you can see from my items what vaults I speak of."

Griphook squeaked with shock when he saw Godric's Sword; bowing once again, he led Harry and Hermione through to an office where he instructed, "If you could wait here Mr Potter, I will fetch my leader; he is the only one authorised to deal with our more...ancestral clientele."

While they waited, Harry sheathed the sword and turned to Hermione, his eyes full of emotion as he spoke, "I'm sorry, by the way, for losing it back there like that. I just can't stand that man: every chance he gets, he uses me for his own gains. I left there because I knew that the time was right: Hermione, it is my destiny to return the honour to both Gryffindor and Slytherin, but I can't do it as Harry; I need to become something...more."

"Like what?" asked Hermione, watching as her fellow third-year leaned against the wall of the office, his arms folded, his emerald eyes watching her.

"I need to become a Lord," explained Harry, "But not a Lord as in Gryffindor and Slytherin; no, this Lord has to be someone new; I told

you that you would have to make the choice and you did. The Lord I have to become..."

There was an awkward pause, but, as she looked to Harry's fiery eyes, Hermione gave a gasp: she could tell the answer before he told her; with a gulp, Hermione spoke in time with Harry's finishing statement.

"Is a Dark Lord!"

And, after a HIGH input from all my reviewers, I have decided to keep this going; thanks to everyone who reviewed, alerted, and favourite this story;

Now though, what does Harry means for the Dark Lord to return?

And, just what will Lucius do if, and when, he figures out what else has happened with our young Lord?

Keep Reading to Find Out;

Next Chapter: Inheritances and there's a letter for the Lord of Slytherin...FROM JAMES POTTER; and, Harry hears more about a certain prisoner and makes his own plans for their meeting; plus, Harry reveals all to Hermione, splits from Riddle, who reveals his part in the plan, has a meeting – and reunion – with Malfoy and a new, though canon, character has a word with the new Lord;

Following Chapter: Following James' letter, Harry has a few choice words for his so-called best friend and none of them are friendly; Hermione has doubts about Harry's destiny: surely she won't betray him? Also, the end of summer brings a meeting for Harry from an old family friend and, to top it all off, there are Dementors on the Hogwarts Express and Tom speaks with Harry about what comes next;

Please Read and Review...

Chapter 4: Dark Proposals

Diagon Alley:

"The Lord that I have to become...is a Dark Lord!"

Harry leaned rather casually against the wall of the office, Hermione wide-eyed with shock and fright as she looked at him: had he, Harry Potter, Lord of Godric Gryffindor and Salazar Slytherin's heritage, just said that he had to become a Dark Lord? And she, Hermione Granger, had willingly followed him into the Lion's Den and was now face-to-face with the Beast himself.

"But Harry," she whispered, her voice filled with shock, "Why do you need to become a Dark Lord? Especially one like...like...him," she shuddered at the last word, but, when she looked back to Harry, she was confused to see him smiling.

"Become like Voldemort?" Harry asked, ignoring the shiver from Hermione at the name, "No Hermione, you misunderstand: before you make any rash decisions, let me explain what I mean and then, if you wish, you can leave here none the wiser; I won't stop you; I won't do anything to you."

"Then please explain," Hermione gasped, taking one of the seats in the room.

"Over the past few weeks," explained Harry, "You may have noticed a...change in me that wasn't there before: this is because of what happened in the Chamber of Secrets; you see Hermione, what I told Dumbledore and the Weasleys was not entirely true."

"Which part?" asked Hermione, trying not to become the Miss-Rule-Keeper that she was known for.

"The part about what happened when I rescued Ginny," Harry answered, "You see Hermione, there is a power, so dark and so strong that Professor Dumbledore himself wants me to ignore it, but I can't. This power, Hermione, is connected both to Salazar Slytherin and to what happened nearly thirteen years ago: it is known as a Horcrux!"

Hermione gasped with horror as she looked into Harry's emerald eyes; what she saw then made her realise just why Harry was telling her all this: he trusted her. Keeping silent, she nodded once and motioned for him to continue.

"The Horcrux," continued Harry, "Was formed, unknowingly, by Voldemort when he tried and failed to kill me: now, over the years, this Horcrux has shown itself in the form of Accidental Magic and outbursts that are stronger than most people. It is also, according to my sources, the real reason I inherited Salazar's legacy and his magical gift of Parseltongue. Now, in the Chamber was a boy: that boy was him, Hermione: Voldemort, or as he was once known, Tom Riddle. When I was bitten by the Basilisk and slain it afterwards, Tom seemed to recognise something within me; he then began talking about the power of the Horcrux and how, through me, he wants only a second chance. But you see Hermione, within his talk, I realised something: Professor Dumbledore, the man who allegedly has my best interests at heart, knows all about the Horcrux and wants it for some darker purpose, which is why I listened to a proposal from Tom. Right now," he took a breath and placed a finger against his head, "As we speak, he is listening: you see Hermione, to gain his redemption, he needed to come back and, combined with the diary, he said that he would be able to use the Horcrux in me to be reborn without anyone dying. In return for which he has promised to teach me all about the power that I am yet to feel and the strength I am yet to experience. In short, Hermione, in Tom's words, the proposal was: give me what lies within you and I shall never harm you again."

"Then...you've...joined...him!" gasped Hermione, part of her unable to grasp what was happening, "And that's why you want...to be a Dark Lord."

"Half right," Harry replied, "You see Hermione, ever since Tom and I were fused as one, I have been making a plan to distract Dumbledore and anyone else from making me do things they wish me to do. This plan, so to speak, involves me becoming neither light nor dark, but something in between, Shadows! This is the Dark Lord that I have to become if I wish to have my freedom Hermione: the Shadow Lord! You see Hermione, this world believes that they live in a world of peace, but there are still forces at work that seek to turn this world into chaos: as Shadow Lord, I only seek to purify those who would abuse their own power or use it to lead others to their

deaths. Those like Voldemort and Dumbledore, to name but a few; once that is done, then there will be a new world of magic where people are free to be the witch or wizard that they wish to be and I," he seemed to pause for emphasis, before his eyes lit up and, looking to Hermione, Harry held a determined expression in his eyes. "I will become the Lord of this new world; it will be my voice that decides the fate of those who tip the balance of power."

"But where do I come into this?" asked Hermione, "And what about Tom?"

"Soon," Harry explained, "He will access the dark side of the Horcrux within me and become flesh and blood; I trust Tom to keep his word; yes, he is Voldemort, but he is also a Slytherin and the previous Heir of Salazar Slytherin, which means he holds a certain extent of honour. I have faith that he won't betray me, so please, as my friend, I hope you can share my faith. I told you this because of what I felt around our third member, Mr Weasley and his family."

"What?" asked Hermione.

"A cold rush," explained Harry, "And, when I later stood with the Weasleys, I felt like I was going to be sick from what I felt; it was like their true feelings were being expressed through magic. As helpful as he was, Hermione, it actually hurts me to say that I can never trust Ron ever again! I mean, now that I look back, I think he and I were a set up: isn't it weird that a pureblood family like the Weasleys just happen to be at King's Cross talking about Muggles and Platform 9 $\frac{3}{4}$ in open public? Shouldn't every witch and wizard know where the platform is without drawing attention to themselves?"

"Well," answered Hermione, "Anyone who's read Hogwarts: A History anyway, but, now that I think about it, Harry, how did you and Ron officially become friends?"

"That's just it," Harry told her, "We never really became friends until I became Gryffindor: meanwhile, he was babbling on about how he was the seventh and then produces Scabbers and, for a seventh son, his family are a bit...well...dense: I mean, I kindly offered to share what snacks I bought with him and he has all he can eat, while producing corned beef sandwiches, making it look like he can't afford much else; he also just wanted to know about my scar and not me: the only boy who did that on the way was...and I hate to

admit it, but it was Malfoy! Even before that, however, I was curious as to how, a few minutes into the journey, he says everywhere else is full; are you finally beginning to understand what I mean?"

As much as she wanted to scream no, Hermione looked into Harry's eyes once again, her own eyes full of realisation as she nodded slowly and seemed to pick up for him, "Now that you mention it, when I was helping Neville search for his toad, we searched over half the compartments and most of them had plenty of space. And then there's the Stone and troll: a spell that he was struggling with in class just happens to become perfected when he uses it against a mountain troll. And, when Hagrid had Norbert, lo and behold, Ron just happens to have a brother who deals in dragons: and last year, when I was researching the Chamber and you were injured: all Ron wanted to know was when we'd be able to blame Malfoy. Harry," she stepped close to him and looked into his eyes, seemingly searching for any sign of deception; when she saw none, Hermione added, "I believe you and, like I said, I will walk where you walk and help you control the power that Tom promised you: if you can start the trust with anyone, Harry then please, let that someone be me."

With a slow, grateful smile, Harry whispered, "Thank you Hermione: with your help, your know how and my power, we can work together to remake this world into the peaceful balanced world that I envisioned."

Pulling back from her, Harry then closed his eyes and reached for the link he shared with the ex-Dark Lord, /Tom?/

/I am here Harry,/ replied the Slytherin, /And heard every word: I am thankful for you still having trust in me and, now that I too understand your plan, I shall be honoured to stand at your right hand, helping you become the Lord of Balance that you seek to be./

/Thank you,/ Harry answered, his eyes closed and a slow smile on his face as he added, /When can you and I split?/

/Tonight,/ Tom informed him, /Leave everything to me Harry and soon, you will have all that I promised you./

As Harry opened his eyes again, he saw Hermione once again sat in the chair; walking towards her, Harry had to turn as the door opened again and Griphook entered accompanied by a broad-shouldered

goblin who was dressed in golden mail armour, the mark of Gringotts – a ram's horn looped through a gold, silver and bronze coin – clear on his breast while a helm made from pure stone and silver lay atop his head; when this goblin saw Harry standing there, bearing the Sword of Gryffindor, he bowed his head and spoke in a deep, almost rumbling tone, "Lord Gryffindor-Slytherin, long have we of Gringotts awaited the day that you, the One True Heir, returns to us to claim the legacy bestowed on you. I am Chief Silverlance and I am honoured to serve the Noble Houses of Godric and Salazar as well as the Noble and Ancient Houses of Potter and Evans."

"And I in turn am honoured to make your acquaintance Lord Silverlance," Harry replied, slowly bowing his head as he continued, "May the Seven Spirits keep your mines fruitful."

Griphook gasped with awed shock as the Chief bowed again, his bass voice full of respect for the teen before him, "And may the Gods of Wealth keep you enriched for all your lifetimes," he answered, before walking to the table and, with a fluid motion, produced two boxes and a roll of parchment from inside his armour. Laying the items on the desk, Silverlance asked, "My Lord; am I right in believing that this female is a trusted friend of your Families?"

"She is," Harry answered, before he slowly pressed a hand on Hermione's shoulder and added, "This is Hermione Granger; she is a close friend of mine and my trusted ally of magic. You will kindly address her with the same respect that you share with me; am I clear?"

"Of course Lord Gryphon," nodded Silverlance, before he explained, "That is the name we bestow to an heir such as yourself; one who shares the blood of Gryffindor with another House or Ancient Family, such as Slytherin. Now, this parchment, my Lord, is the Last Will and Testament of your parents, Lord and Lady Potter, which is to be read today in your presence and yours alone. In these boxes are the keys to Lord Gryffindor and Lord Slytherin's vaults while the other holds the ring for the Noble and Ancient House of Potter; shall I begin with the will, my Lord?"

"Yes," Harry replied, a part of him wondering how and why his parents' will was to be read in his presence alone; as he waited, there was another rush of cold, before Harry asked, "Chief

Silverlance, have you invited anyone else to hear what is about to be read?"

"No Lord Gryphon," answered the Chief, his eyes on the door as he explained, "This is only for you and no-one else: Griphook, see who is waiting to see Lord Potter."

As Griphook left, Silverlance looked at Harry as he explained, "I apologise for the lack of respect in this dealing Lord Gryphon; rest assured that we will do all we can to see that your parents' last request is honoured. Now, while we wait for Griphook to return, may I suggest a way to protect your vaults in future?"

"Of course," Harry nodded, his eyes shifting between Silverlance and the door; the cold feeling he had experienced had never felt so powerful and, if Harry's suspicions were right, then there was only one person who could affect him that much.

The sound of Silverlance's voice made Harry turn back, "We at Gringotts believe that client safety and vault security is of our highest priority, which is why we have fashioned what is known simply as a Blood Lock: what this involves, Lord Gry..."

"Can you change that name to Evans?" asked Harry suddenly, "I wish to honour my parents and, to be honest, Gryphon sounds a bit...well...weird!"

"Of course Lord Evans," answered Silverlance, before he continued, "As I was saying, what the Blood Lock involves is a few drops of blood over the keys of your vaults and then, when you visit those vaults, only your hand, your DNA, your blood, can open the vault. It is similar to how we were able to defend that which was taken some years ago except that any who are neither trusted by the owner or not the owner themselves shall receive a severe penalty and be sent far away from here, not to mention the magical shock that they will feel afterwards."

"Sounds safe enough," commented Hermione, her eyes on Harry as she explained, "I did some research on Goblin Wards and found that a ward such as this can only be breached by the authority of the owner and with a decree in the same blood. At least your treasures would be safe from any who wish to access your vaults unlawfully."

"Miss Granger speaks the truth," Silverlance added, "So, what will it be, Lord Evans?"

"Do it," Harry told him, before he pulled the Sword of Gryffindor from his back and, with a whisper of Parseltongue, shrank it to dagger-size, before pricking his finger, watching as his blood flowed from the wound. At the same time, Silverlance produced three keys and, indicating each one, told Harry to simply smear his blood over the keys.

Doing so, Harry then raised his voice and declared, "I, Harry James Gryffindor-Slytherin-Potter, known as Lord Evans, call on the power of Gryffindor's Sword and my blood lineage to recognise the Blood Wards placed on my vaults. Only with my official decree shall anyone be able to access the monetary amounts within and only with my blood shall this ward be breached; so mote it be!"

As he finished, there was a powerful burst of magic, which made Hermione shield her eyes, before there was a cry and, as Harry watched, Fawkes appeared in a burst of fire. With a swift motion of his wings, the phoenix sealed each ward with a feather from his wings and, as he turned to Harry, the majestic creature bowed his head and flamed away, leaving Harry smiling with confidence.

With the wards sealed, Harry then spoke up, "I suppose we should wait and see who wants to see me," he turned to the door and didn't have to wait long as Griphook returned and, as Harry had guessed, he was accompanied by none other than Professor Dumbledore.

"Lord Dumbledore," Silverlance growled, "Why have you disturbed a sacred meeting such as this one?"

"I," Dumbledore replied, his own voice no longer grandfatherly, "Am officially recognised as Future Lord Potter's magical guardian: Gringotts have no right to summon Harry without my..."

"Lord Evans," Silverlance interrupted, "Was not summoned, but in turn summoned me, Lord Dumbledore; he is also only to hear that which I present him alone. Your guardianship has no business in such a personal matter; now, leave the building or I will be forced to make you!"

Harry, who had been busily flexing his fingers, suddenly had an inspiration; looking to Silverlance, he asked, "If I allowed anyone to hear this, would they be able to speak of it outside this room?"

"No," Silverlance answered, his eyes on Harry as he asked, "Who do you wish to be here Lord Evans?"

"Dobby!"

The House Elf appeared in a crack, his head bowed to Harry as he asked, "Lord Harry Evans summons Dobby sir?"

"Has Mr Malfoy arrived in the Alleys yet?" asked Harry, his eyes now on Dumbledore, who was wide-eyed and trying not to let his emotions get the better of him.

"Lord Malfoy waits in the Leaky Cauldron sir," answered Dobby, his own eyes now on Dumbledore as he waited for a command.

"Can you go to him and tell him that Lord Harry Evans, Lord of Slytherin, wishes his presence now?" Dobby vanished and Harry, turning to Dumbledore, gave a coy smile as he added, "And as for you, Headmaster, I feel that I must say this now: you have no business here and are most certainly not allowed to be here. So, if you will kindly leave, I will see you in September with the other students."

As Dumbledore looked at Harry, the door opened once again and Lucius walked into the room, dressed in splendid robes of silver and black, his face stern as he asked, "Lord Slytherin, you requested my presence?"

"I did Lord Malfoy," Harry replied, "And I thank you for accepting my invitation to meet today: it seems that, unknowingly, I have a magical guardian who seeks to claim superiority over my vaults; now, as a friend of Slytherin and a member of the Ministry, I wish to formally name you, sir, as my official representative: will you accept?"

"Of course," Lucius nodded, "I am honoured that you entrust such a responsibility young Lord; I, Lord Lucius Abraxas Malfoy, humbly accept the role of magical guardian and official representative to Lord Harry Evans."

With a nod, Harry turned back to Silverlance and added, "You may continue; and please, remove Professor Dumbledore from the room: he has no business being here."

When Dumbledore left, Lucius, clearly seeing the invite he was being given, conjured a chair and took a seat behind Harry, who watched as Silverlance explained, "I shall first read a letter addressed to you, Lord Evans, from your late Father, Lord James Potter!"

Unrolling the parchment that he had first placed on the table, Silverlance cleared his throat and recited:

To my little Prongslet;

If you are reading, or hearing this letter then my worst fears have come to pass and I am no longer able to be there for you; I wish you to know that I write this letter to explain a few things and warn you about certain members of the wizarding community who would seek to use you for their own ends.

The first thing I wish to explain is the purpose of this letter; it is to be read sometime around your thirteenth birthday and, if the terms of this letter are not seen to, then the House of Potter will be forced to approach the Council of Gringotts and the Ministry in an act of Level 5 Fraud and betrayal of a trust forged between our ancestors.

So, onto business: the first thing I wish to tell you is that your life is free to be whatever you wish, as long as you are placed with a long-time friend of mine: Remus Lupin, a man whom I trust with my life. Secondly, with this letter, I, Lord James Marcus Potter, officially recognise you, Harry James Potter, as the new Lord of the House, which grants you full control over the assets and finances of the Family. With Remus watching over you, I know that you will grow into a wise and powerful wizard.

Which now brings me onto the warnings that I have to tell you: first and foremost, know this: Albus Dumbledore and his band, known as the Order of the Phoenix, are NOT our friends nor our allies; the only members of the Order that you may trust are: Remus Lupin, Severus Snape, Sirius Black and Andromeda Tonks. The other members, especially Albus Dumbledore and the entire Weasley

family are not your friends: I weep for you if they have somehow drawn you into their web.

Dumbledore is a manipulative man who will not stop until one of two things happen: either the dark falls or you die and the Weasleys are like his personal puppy-dogs. Lily and I were members of the Order, but we served a higher calling: the safety and protection of our only son. Those Weasleys also tried to bind you into a marriage contract with their daughter Ginerva: marry her Harry and I will never forgive you.

Now, outside the Order, there are a few witches and wizards we trust: one of our biggest friends is none other than Lord Lucius Malfoy and his family; if Lucius speaks to you, tell him that this friendship is for the little misunderstanding in my seventh year and for all his help with Remus.

Now, there is one thing that Lily wanted you to know: YOU ARE NOT TO BE PLACED, NO MATTER WHAT, WITH THAT SICK BITCH SHE CALLED A SISTER. Petunia and her vile family are not even Evans blooded: Lily, contrary to what people believe, is a pureblood and Petunia was adopted by her wizarding parents. If anyone, and they know who they are, dare to place you with those sick freaks, then I hope you make it your first priority to continue the legacy Sirius, Remus and I started: ask Remus if you need help.

Now, at long last, I have one final thing to tell you: while we did not trust Dumbledore, we also did not have any allegiance to...Voldemort, so, if you go either way, Light or Dark, then know that we will always be proud of you.

This just leaves my official declaration: I, Lord James Marcus Potter, Heir of Godric Gryffindor, do decree the following acts towards Future Lord Harry James Potter:

By the will of Lord Potter, Future Lord Potter is to be legally entrusted to the guardianship of:

REMUS LUPIN

By the will of Lord Potter, Future Lord Potter's monetary and political state is to be handled until he turns of age by:

LUCIUS MALFOY, SIRIUS BLACK OR SEVERUS SNAPE

By the Will of Lord Potter, Future Lord Potter can approach the following candidates in confidence due to oaths or friendship:

LUCIUS MALFOY, SIRIUS BLACK, REMUS LUPIN, SEVERUS SNAPE – OATH OR ANDROMEDA TONKS.

Take care of yourself Harry; I know you will make us proud

Lord James Potter.

As Silverlance finished his reading, Harry could only look away from the goblin, his eyes cold and dark as he kept the memory fresh in his mind: his Father wanted what Tom had promised, which was for Harry to be free and able to work his own magic. And, on top of that, the young wizard now knew why he felt cold around the Weasleys; it was all because of Dumbledore and this Order of the Phoenix, whatever that was.

However, at the same time, Harry had been given revelations that he could never believe: Aunt Petunia was his Mother's half-sister, his Mother was pureblood, which made him a pureblood; Severus Snape was one of the few who his parents trusted and, on top of all that, his Father, James Potter, had done the same that, apparently, Sirius Black had done and had one true master: his son. To Harry, it sounded like his Father was only happy when Harry was happy and now, this Remus Lupin was meant to be his legal guardian and, to top it all off, his Father had personally stated that he would be proud of Harry no matter which side he went to.

Looking up, Harry's eyes met Lucius, who nodded curtly and spoke in his usual authority-driven voice, "Lord Potter, I am honoured that you chose to trust me with your safety: rest assured, the small matter that your Father spoke of and the debt I owe him can now be paid. I will leave you, here, today, and call Remus: I will ask him to come and meet you and Miss Granger at the Leaky Cauldron and you can choose from there where you go."

"Thank you Lord Malfoy," Harry whispered, his eyes looking to Lucius as he added, "If you have the time, I would like a chance to rekindle my relations with your House. As Lord of Slytherin, I feel

that you and your son deserve it, so, once you have called Remus, can we meet where we arranged?"

"I will make the arrangements," Lucius then bowed to Harry and left the room, leaving Harry to look at Hermione, his eyes showing an amused look as he smiled at her.

Turning back to Silverlance, Harry asked, "So what happens now?"

"With your Father's will," explained Silverlance, "Now I can present you the rings of Potter and Evans, but you, Lord Evans, must use your full name and declare that you accept emancipation under the four Houses."

"As you wish," Harry then watched as the goblin leader opened the box and, with a swift flourish, pulled out two rings: one was solid gold with a diamond-encrusted figure-head shaped like a winged dragon; the second ring was silver and held a crimson and emerald phoenix holding onto a bolt of lightning.

Handing both of these items to Harry, Silverlance continued his explanation, "As Lord of Potter, you now inherit your magical potential: you will be able to extend your Parselmagic abilities to those of the dragons and command the element of fire. Under the Lordship to the House of Evans, you inherit a Mastery of Charm-casting as well as the arcane, and extremely powerful ability to control and use the element of lightning as your own. Plus, you now inherit the form of a phoenix as one of your Animagus forms and can communicate telepathically with other avian creatures."

Harry just nodded as he then lifted his Chimera Ring and asked, "And, aside from Parselmagic, what about Gryffindor and Slytherin?"

"As Lord of Gryffindor," Silverlance answered, "You inherit a Mastery of Transfiguration and an in-depth knowledge of Occlumency and Legilimency: as Lord of Slytherin, aside from the ability and powers of Parseltongue, you also inherit a full controllable mastery over the Dark Arts and Potions as well as a knowledge of Earth-based magic, such as Healing and Shielding Magic. All in all, Lord Evans, you are one powerful wizard and I, Chief Igorak Silverlance, am honoured to have been of service to you."

"Thank you for everything Chief Silverlance," Harry nodded, before holding up the three rings and, in a commanding voice, declared, "I am Lord Harry James Gryffindor-Evans-Slytherin-Potter, Heir to the Four Houses and Last Heir of Evans and Potter; by rite of Inheritance, I decree that I accept my full magical and financial emancipation under the Houses of Slytherin, Gryffindor, Evans and Potter."

A resounding boom of thunder echoed through the room, actually hurting Harry's ears as he watched a rather interesting spectacle of magic occur: his Evans and Potter rings suddenly fused together, creating the image of a gold and silver-woven ring that held an image of a dragon and phoenix linking their wings, the two of them surrounding a bolt of lightning. Then, as Harry gasped with shock, a second powerful burst of magic coursed through his veins and, as he listened, Harry heard Tom speak to him, /You are reborn Harry: enjoy your power./

When the magic faded, Harry bowed politely as he addressed Silverlance, "I am glad of what we have achieved here today Chief Silverlance: rest assured that Gringotts and all her workers shall remain friends to each of my Houses. For now, I will take my leave, but with one last request."

"Of course Lord Evans," replied Silverlance, his eyes brightening with the honour he had just received.

Turning to the last figure in the room, Harry explained, "Griphook, you have served my family well by taking care of my trust vault and assisting me in my first year: it is due to this honour and assistance that I would like to name you as Overseer of my four vaults: do you accept?"

Griphook seemed to gasp with shock and wonder, his eyes wide with gracious emotions, before, with a quick bow of his head, he answered, "By the Gods of our kin, I swear to protect and enforce the treasures of your Family with the highest magic, Lord Evans: I thank you for placing such trust in me."

With that last remark, Harry smiled, nodded once and rose from his seat, Hermione rising behind him and taking his hand as she followed him out of Gringotts and down towards the Leaky Cauldron.

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Leaky Cauldron: That Evening:

Harry and Hermione chose to stay in separate rooms, which gave both of them a chance to reflect on what they had learned: Hermione, with her oath of allegiance, told Harry that she would enjoy helping him master his powers and learning his crafts, a statement that Harry agreed with. Harry meanwhile, had one big thing to sort out and, with the warning from Tom about their divide; the young Lord knew that he needed to be alone for what was to happen.

Sat alone in his room, his mind open to the link between him and his inner self, Harry waited patiently, his blood boiling with anticipation and dark magic coursing through him. Closing his eyes, Harry reached for his mind guest and asked, /Are you ready Tom?/

/Thanks to you,/ answered Riddle, /I have gained enough strength to become flesh and blood; thank you Harry...no, thank you Lord Slytherin: I owe you a debt of gratitude that I hope I can pay off by serving you as Shadow Lord. If you wish it, sir, I can numb your body so that our split won't hurt you as much as I believe it will./

/No,/ Harry replied, his emerald eyes darkening with the mention of his new title, /I trust you Tom: when I have achieved what I need to, then I will reward you with a place at my side; I thank you for opening my eyes and making me see the Light, so to speak; now, do what you need to./

Tom seemed to be amused by Harry's answer, but obliged nonetheless: as soon as he opened his own mind, Harry regretted not accepting the numbing: his scar burned with even more fire than ever before, a feeling that made Harry wonder if someone was performing brain surgery on him; it actually felt like his head was splitting open, forcing his eyes to water and his teeth to grind together.

At the same time, a powerful ripping sensation spread through Harry's chest and abdomen as he seemed to feel muscles and bones becoming stronger, his body growing to nearly 5 ft 11 and actually giving the young wizard a look that would come to remind people of Draco Malfoy, except with black hair. His insides felt like

there was a powerful fire coursing through him, Harry actually had to steady himself as his heart raced faster than what seemed humanly possible, his mind telling him that a ward of some kind was now being broken while another was being formed around the room.

/Trust me Harry,/ Tom whispered, /No-one can hear us; so, if you must, then scream!/

Harry obliged; his mouth emitted a scream of pain and broken magic that would have put any mental patient to shame; his magic exploded from within him, spreading outwards, each pulse of energy providing the young Lord with another burst of newfound knowledge and spell power. Finally, there was a flash of red, a burst of tremendous power that emanated from Harry's forehead and, when both faded, Harry doubled over and threw up, his stomach emptying faster and faster each second.

When he could bring up nothing more, Harry looked up weakly, his vision blurred and his body weak; standing before him was what appeared to be a boy in his own teens; a boy with black hair that was styled upwards and a pair of cold, hazel eyes that, in the light of the magic, seemed to become blood-red.

Harry, fatigue washing over him, asked in Parseltongue, 'Tom?'

'It's me Harry,' answered the restored Tom Riddle, 'I'm back and...' lowering himself to one knee, the ex-Dark Lord bowed his head as he spoke in clear, slick tones:

"I am yours to command, my Shadow Lord!"

Chapter 4 and Harry has new powers, new allies and a new life to look forward to, but can he keep his new self locked inside for now or will he become the Shadow Lord all at once?

Also, now that he's free of all those who seek to use him, what other surprises await our young Lord, especially where the Marauders and Slytherins are concerned?

Keep Reading to Find Out;

Next Chapter: Harry hears more about a certain prisoner and makes his own plans for their meeting; has a reunion with Malfoy and a new,

though canon, character has a word with the new Lord; Following James' letter, Harry has a few choice words for his so-called best friend and none of them are friendly; Hermione has doubts about Harry's destiny: surely she won't betray him? Also, the end of summer brings a meeting for Harry from an old family friend and, to top it all off, there are Dementors on the Hogwarts Express and Tom speaks with Harry about what comes next;

Following Chapter: Hogwarts is different with a different Harry now within its walls, but can an unexpected ally help Harry find a Sanctuary in the School? Also, an AU sorting reveals two surprises for Hogwarts and, as his first week gets underway, Harry begins to see the difference between friend and foe, but what about those...closer to home?

Chapter 7: Hogsmeade and a very unlikely alliance; plus, lessons with Remus, tuition from Severus and some alone time with Hermione helps Harry to control the sudden maelstrom that burns within him, but will Dumbledore give up on the boy-Lord so easily? Also, our Shadow Lord wants a word with his newly-acquired allies about where they truly stand...

Please Read and Review...

Chapter 5: Dinner With the Devil

Diagon Alley: End of August:

After dividing himself from Tom, Harry's magical growth was almost inhuman: in such a short space of time, the young wizard managed to regain control over everything that Tom had given him, including his grasp on the powers he'd inherited from his four Houses. When Hermione had met the now ex-Dark Lord, she had been courteous and friendly, but Harry didn't need to read her mind to know that she had doubts about him.

In secret, so did Harry.

After receiving his vast inheritances, Harry had undergone a complete magical makeover: with his eyesight healed and his body now a pure-bred prime example of a teenage wizard, the young Lord turned to his equipment and clothing. With Hermione's help, Harry managed to purchase a whole new wardrobe and set of Hogwarts robes complete with one of his four crests. She also helped him look into a multi-store trunk for all his equipment, which resulted in Harry buying a particularly large oak trunk and, through some wandless magic, altering it so that he and Hermione could now call it their own Training Complex.

In the time that passed since his birthday, Harry also began to concentrate more on his studies, which, to his surprise, he found easier now that his magical knowledge was equal, if not greater, when compared to any other thirteen year old, save for Hermione, if that was possible. Staying with his wandless and verbal magic, Harry decided to take his more gifted magic at a slower pace starting with the power of lightning that he had inherited from his Mother's family.

When he awoke on the Friday before his return to Hogwarts, Harry stretched tall and heaved a sigh, his eyes scanning his room in the Cauldron with a look of silent amusement. Next door to his room was where Hermione was sleeping while Tom had taken the second bed within the double room: looking over to the young teen, Harry was still surprised at how quickly Tom had accepted Harry as the new Lord in his life and even gone as far as using his new rank as Shadow Lord to show his allegiance.

'Why then?' thought Harry, slowly getting dressed into a black tracksuit with silver-trimmed edges, 'Do I still feel so unsure about him? Now that we're no longer sharing a body, I can't talk to him in my mind, but I can still feel that there's a part of Tom that's hidden from me.'

With a shrug, Harry sat back down on his bed and, in a low voice, called, "Dobby!"

The House Elf appeared with his usual crack, his once-beaten body now healed and stronger than ever, as he bowed to his new Master, "Lord Evans summoned me sir?"

"I did," Harry replied, making a note as to how Dobby now spoke in an almost perfect sentence, "I believe I have a meeting this morning with Lord Malfoy, am I right?"

"Ten-o'clock sir," Dobby nodded, "Lord Evans has over an hour before then sir; shall I prepare breakfast for Lord Evans and his friends?"

"No thank you Dobby," Harry smiled, his eyes low as he added, "Wait: what do you mean friends? Only Hermione is here and Tom does what he wants...Dobby?" He gave the House Elf a piercing glare as he asked, "Who else is here?"

"Weasley Family have arrived sir," Dobby explained, "Young Weasley seems excited about seeing Master Harry sir."

'Damn,' thought Harry, reaching for a notebook that lay on his bedside desk; flipping it open, the young Lord gave a snarl as he found that the date in question was put down as the date of the Weasleys' return from Egypt. Even as he closed the book, Harry still couldn't believe that Ron and his Family had won a competition through the Ministry that resulted in them taking a trip.

With a sigh, Harry looked to Dobby as he asked, "Has Neville arrived yet Dobby?"

"Longbottom arrived last night sir," answered Dobby and Harry, relieved to hear that he would see a friendly face, smiled in reply: Neville, shortly after Harry's birthday, had written a hasty letter explaining that he too was going away for the holidays and would be

in Diagon Alley in the last week of summer. Harry, understanding the young boy all too well, wrote back saying that Neville should enjoy his holiday and that he – Harry – and Hermione would be waiting for him.

'In that case,' thought Harry, 'I guess I'd better face the music.'

Rising from his own bed, Harry looked over and saw that Tom was now propped upright, a book on Charms open on his lap; when he saw Harry looking, the former Slytherin nodded and told him, "If you want me to wait here Harry, then I will respect your wishes."

"No," Harry replied, slowly shaking his head, a cold, sly smile on his face, "I think you should join us Tom: no reason that you shouldn't become part of the new Trio."

"But the Weasleys!" exclaimed Tom, "What if Ginny recognises me?"

"Then I have a plan for that," Harry told him, slipping a long emerald green robe over his suit, "Don't worry Tom: at the end of the day, you are here as my guest and my friend."

Tom nodded and quickly dressed himself, before following Harry down to the main room of the Leaky Cauldron; however, before they got anywhere near the stairway that would take them down into the bar area, a high-octane voice reached their ears, "I'M WARNING YOU NOW HERMIONE: KEEP THAT BLOODY CAT AWAY FROM SCABBERS OR I'LL TURN IT INTO A TEA COSY!"

"Ron's here," Harry remarked, brushing a lock of black hair away from his ears.

"What was your first clue?" asked Tom sarcastically, "Honestly Harry; is he always so loud on a morning?"

"Fraid so," remarked Harry rubbing the bridge of his nose as they slowly descended the stairs.

As they slowly made their way down, Harry actually had to smile as he saw Hermione holding a baggy-furred ginger cat, her voice full of a defensive tone, "He's a cat Ronald; it's instinct for him to chase mice!"

"Then he should chase Ron," laughed Harry, making his presence known; Hermione smiled at the remark while Ron, who had finally acknowledged his friend, was slack-jawed as he stared at the new Harry Potter.

"Harry?" he asked, eyeing the robe and newly athletic appearance with a look of what Harry saw to be envy, "Is that you?"

"Well," Harry answered calmly, "Unless there's another Boy-Who-Lived around here with a lightning bolt scar on his forehead and can speak Parseltongue, then yes, it's me: how was Egypt?"

"Brilliant," Ron laughed, walking in stride with his two companions, Tom hanging back until Harry made his move, "Full of old tombs and mummies; even Scabbers liked it."

"Did you know?" asked Harry suddenly, "The Ancient Egyptians actually used to worship cats? That they considered them the animal vessels of the gods and pharaohs incarnate?"

"Well...yeah," Ron gulped, looking now to Hermione, "But Harry; that...thing is no cat: it's more like a pig with hairs."

Harry then made his move; when Ron had sat down, Harry slammed his hands down on the table, his emerald eyes full of fire as he whispered, "Be very careful Ronald Weasley: I will only give you this one warning: if I ever hear you, or hear of you insulting anything to do with Hermione, I will make you rue the day you were born. I already have reason to completely ostracize you completely, but, for now, we're still the infamous Golden Trio of Gryffindor and, until I decide where your loyalties lie, I will make sure that you do not speak another bad word to her, am I clear?"

"Y-yeah," Ron answered, his eyes wide as he saw the fire burning in Harry's eyes, "Of course mate, but what do you mean ostracize?"

"In short," Harry told him, "If I find that these...rumours are true, then it will be the end of the Golden Trio; now, why don't you apologise to Hermione before I turn Scabbers into a tea cosy."

"Sorry Hermione," Ron remarked, his eyes low as he added, "Crookshanks is a nice cat." He went to stroke the cat in Hermione's

arms, but the ginger animal yowled and scratched at him, Ron pulling back his hand.

"Harry!"

Harry's tune changed back into his Golden Boy persona as he stood and turned, a smile on his face when he saw Mrs Weasley and the others walking towards them. "Lady Weasley; Lord Weasley, it's nice to see you again; enjoy your holiday?"

"Actually we did," replied Mr Weasley, surprised at the formality used by Harry; it was only when he noticed the dragon crest on Harry's robes that the penny finally dropped. "And I see we're not the only ones to have an eventful summer."

"What?" asked Harry, casually looking to his family crest, "You mean this? Oh yes; I came into my inheritance as Lord of Gryffindor and Slytherin's Ancestral Houses; through them, I also became Lord of my Mother and Father's families."

"But your Mother was Muggleborn wasn't she?" asked Ron, in turn making his biggest mistake of the day.

"No," Hermione answered, noticing Harry's hands clenching into fists, "Actually, Ronald, she was a pureblood witch and a powerful one at that: Harry's Father, the late Lord James Potter, requested that Harry be aware of his status as of his thirteenth birthday, which also includes meeting his true legal guardian: when did he say he'd see us Harry?"

"Apparently," Harry answered, "When we go to Hogwarts: he said he'd meet us on Platform 9 $\frac{3}{4}$, which reminds me Hermione; as a thanks to your parents, can you tell them that I, Lord Harry Gryffindor-Evans-Slytherin-Potter, would be honoured to have them for Christmas?"

"I...I'll send the owl straight away," Hermione gasped, rising from her seat and making her way back to her room, Harry aware of Tom escorting her.

That just left Harry and the Weasleys, all of whom looked at the new Lord in a new light; Harry, however, shifted his eyes to a clock behind the bar, before he added, "I'd love to stay and talk about the

summer, Lord Weasley, but I have a previous engagement: perhaps dinner? Tonight? I know of a nice restaurant near here where I can answer all your questions."

"We would be honoured to accept Lord Potter," Mr Weasley nodded, his eyes looking to each member of his family as he added, "And that's all of us: what time?"

"Dobby!"

The House Elf appeared on command, bowing to Harry, he asked, "How can I be of service sir?"

"Go to the White Angel Restaurant in Diagon Alley and ask them for a reservation for..." He counted up his list: 7 Weasleys, him, Hermione, Neville – though he didn't know it; Tom and three surprise guests, before he added, "For fourteen: tell them that Lord Evans makes this request personally." When Dobby left, Harry gave a curt nod and spoke in a voice full of respect as he told them, "I will see you all there and please, dress to impress."

Leaving the stunned Weasleys, Harry walked down through Diagon Alley, his eyes looking back to the arch as he smiled and shook his head: tonight would be very interesting, especially when the Weasleys found out who his three guests were.

Stopping outside Florean Fortescue's, Harry found himself waiting for a few minutes before a familiar white haired figure escorted by a second familiar teen, both of whom were dressed in long emerald green cloaks and casual, yet smart-looking robes of black and silver. Standing from his seat, Harry gave a curt nod and exclaimed, "Lord Lucius Malfoy, I am grateful to your House for accepting my invite."

"Lord Harry Evans," replied Lucius, giving his white-haired companion a shock, "I am honoured to have been requested by one of such influence and fortitude as yourself: I hope this meeting provides the foundation for a long and fruitful union of friendship between our two families."

"As do I sir," Harry nodded, his hands then indicating the area behind, "Please, take a seat."

When all three members were seated, Harry lay his hands on the table and looked to Lucius' companion, his eyes once more full of fire as he added, "And it was nice of you to accept this meeting also Malfoy."

"Look Potter," scowled Draco Malfoy, "I am only here because my Father requested a meeting with some Lord and said I would benefit from it: if I had known it was you, then I would have told him no!"

"And yet he knew who I was and you didn't," Harry heaved a sigh, his eyes narrowed with sly amusement as he asked, "Don't you wish to hear me out Malfoy? Oh, and before you answer, let me say this: out here, it's Lord Evans!"

"As I said, Lord Evans, I am here because I was told of how this could benefit myself," Draco replied, his own hands now on the table, "So, sir, what is it my Father and I can do for you?"

"Very simply," Harry answered, "I wish to rekindle our...somewhat cracked relationship; now, before you say anything, let me add this: I am not just Lord Evans, but Lord Potter, Lord Gryffindor and Lord Slytherin as well." He put emphasis on the last House, his tone almost hissing with authority as he added, "So you can see just how this can benefit someone like you Draco Malfoy."

If Malfoy had been surprised to learn that Harry was a Lord, the revelation of whose House he was Lord over was the icing on the cake: his face went as white as his hair and his eyes widened with shock; looking to his Father, he asked, "Is he lying?"

"No," Lucius replied, "Lord Evans personally requested that I represent him as liaison in financial and political matters: as Lord of his House, Draco, you must be aware of what it means to bear such a responsibility."

Harry then held up a hand, a slow smile creeping over his face as he explained, "Malfoy, this is you Draco, I do not ask for us to be friends or best buds, but to simply acknowledge the other as a respectable wizard. There are things I am beginning to learn about myself and about the world I see and let me tell you, my sight is not so black and white now. What I ask of you is simply to be my...advocate within the House of Slytherin while I already have a similar advocate in Gryffindor."

"Who? Weasley?"

"No," Harry answered, his voice somehow colder than before as he explained, "Tonight, the Weasleys and I are going to sit down to dinner; little do they know that I have ulterior motives in that meeting: my advocate, since you asked, is actually Neville Longbottom and, before you say anything against him, let me just warn you: I am more powerful than before; I possess skills that you can only dream of and, if I have to, then I will use whatever means necessary to protect my friends and my advocates."

Draco had opened his mouth to argue, but, when he heard Harry defending Neville, he quickly shut it, his eyes narrowed as he asked, "And what would I need to do for you? As this...advocate?"

"Simply defend my hallowed name," Harry explained, "As I said, Draco; I have plans for the coming year that cannot be disturbed and it is imperative that, while I appear to still be a somewhat matured Harry Potter, third year Gryffindor, the few that I trust know me as the Lord of two Founders and my true status as a pureblood member of the Houses of Potter and Evans. As my advocate, you would simply be required to reduce any slander and act as my eyes and ears within Slytherin; in return for this service, I will teach you my new power, including certain spells and abilities that you cannot learn for at least another two or three years. Like I said, we would not be friends, but we would be allies and, well I suppose partners would be the real term for this; so, Malfoy, what do you say?"

"I don't know," answered Draco, "You've given me quite a lot to think about."

"Then," Harry suggested, "I would like to invite you to dinner tonight at the White Angel: there you will see for yourself what I plan to do to the Weasleys and there you can give me your answer; oh, and if you wish, you may bring a...what's the right word? Oh yes, a plus-one; is that satisfactory with you, Lord Malfoy?"

"My son and I would be honoured to accept your invite," Lucius nodded, his usually stern face showing a sense of respect in his grey eyes as he added, "What time do you wish our presence, Lord Evans?"

"Shall we say 6:45 at the Angel?"

"Perfect; dress code?"

"Dress Robes and smart appearance; simply mention your name and you will be shown to our table."

Lucius then nodded and rose from his seat; holding out his hand, he spoke to Harry, "Lord Evans, you have given my son much to think about, but, from what I have seen today, I know you to be a changed young man: as Lord of my Family, the Noble and Ancient House of Malfoy, I extend my hand in friendship to the Houses of Evans, Potter, Gryffindor and Slytherin."

Nodding once, Harry linked his hand with Lucius as he replied, "And, as Lord of my Family, the Noble and Ancient Houses of Evans, Potter, Gryffindor and Slytherin, I hereby accept the friendship and alliance with the House of Malfoy."

As the two parties departed, Harry smiled to himself as he contemplated what would happen at dinner that night: one thing was for certain, it was going to be an interesting meeting.

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White Angel Restaurant:

The White Angel was the right name for such a grand place; located off one of the side alleys to Diagon Alley, it was a grey-stone building that was decorated with slashes of white marble that resembled feathers. Inside the building were two floors of tables and a large serving area: white moulds and designs filled the walls, depicting signs of angelic design that fit the theme of calmness and peace. The whole restaurant was filled the smell of fresh cooking as well as a deep, almost hypnotic scent of lavender and roses.

When Harry arrived, dressed in a smart set of black and green Dress Robes, Hermione and Tom at his sides, the staff of the restaurant saw to them immediately: it was no real surprise though: after all, the White Angel was one of the few retail properties that fed interest into the vault of Evans as it had been originally opened by his great-grandmother, a piece of information that Harry had discovered from his research.

So, basically, if Lord Evans needed a table, then Lord Evans was given a table: set for fifteen, as Harry recalled his request to Lucius, the table was covered by a large white satin cloth and decorated with plates, bowls and candelabra made from wrought silver and bearing the phoenix crest of the Evans lineage.

Seating himself at the head of the table, as was his place, Harry saw that Hermione was seated on his right while Tom was on his left; as the original host, Harry knew that he remained standing until all his guests arrived: with seats of fifteen, he had to laugh when he saw how the arrangements were made: next to Hermione would be Mr Weasley while next to Tom would sit Lucius; following that, Mrs Weasley and Mrs Malfoy would sit opposite one another; however, following that, Draco would sit with his plus one while Ron and Ginny would sit opposite one another. Then, Fred and George would sit opposite one another and Neville and Percy would sit opposite one another.

Sure enough, moments later, one of the staff, recognised by his plain white robe and black cravat, bowed with respect as he exclaimed, "Lord Evans, your hallowed guests are arriving sir: shall I send them up?"

"Yes," Harry answered, watching as Lucius, Draco and their plus-ones arrived: Mrs Malfoy was, in a word, beautiful: dressed in a long silver and emerald gown, she had the Malfoy white hair and pale face; her own blue eyes made her look as intimidating as her husband. When she looked at Hermione, the female Malfoy gave a scowl, which was quickly dropped when Lucius whispered something into her ear.

While Lucius was talking with Narcissa, Harry inspected Draco's plus-one: she was a brown haired, hazel-eyed girl who was dressed in a long blue dress bearing an image of a black stag whose antlers rose to form wing-like shapes above its head. When the girl saw Harry, she curtsied low and waited patiently for Harry to speak, while Draco bowed with respect and Lucius and his wife both bowed as well.

"Welcome Lord Malfoy, Lady Malfoy, Heir Malfoy," Harry spoke with clarity and the voice of someone older than him, "I, Lord Harry James Gryffindor-Evans-Slytherin-Potter, known to the world as

Lord Evans, thank you for accepting my invitation: Heir Malfoy, who do you bring as your guest?"

"Heiress Astoria Greengrass at your service Lord Evans," replied the girl; she had a light voice that showed Harry she was younger than Draco, but, the mention of the Greengrass Family made Harry smile: they were another Slytherin-loyal family who, like the Malfoys, respected the pureblood ways. When Harry told her to rise, Astoria added, "By contract, I am the betrothed of Draco Malfoy and look forward to knowing you, my Lord."

"Thank you Heiress Greengrass," Harry smiled, indicating the seats as he added, "Please, if you would be so kind as to take your seats; our other guests should be here shortly."

When Neville arrived, much to the shock of the Malfoys, Harry was impressed: dressed in a long white and red set of Dress Robes, Neville looked nothing like the forgetful boy that he had once been known for. This, of course, was thanks to Harry's advice about being his own person and not allowing anyone to walk over him. When he too gave the formal greeting, it was Draco Malfoy who actually scoffed and, when Harry passed, he heard the Malfoy Heir whisper to Astoria, "Who is he and what has he done with Longbottom?"

That reception, however, was nothing compared to what happened when the Weasleys arrived: dressed in seven sets of long black dress robes, which seemed almost brand new, only Mr Weasley was willing to step forward and give the required greeting, before taking his seat; moments after, Harry watched as the Weasleys all took their placed seats, his eyes noticing Ron feel almost special at being asked to such a high-class place.

'Don't kid yourself,' thought Harry, aware of Hermione and Tom giving him a look of certainty, 'There are only a few hallowed guests here today Ron and you're not one of them. I had my doubts about you and now I know: you big motherfucking liar!'

The lights on the candelabra began to flicker dangerously as Harry's magic extended across the table, his anger directed at his so-called friends, before, still playing the part of host, he cleared his throat and spoke to the table, "My friends, my hallowed guests, I wish to thank you for accepting my invitations here tonight: now, as you may notice, there is one person here that many do not know," He nodded

at Tom who rose and, with a deep breath, nodded politely at each of them while Harry continued, "This is Thomas Kyle Riddle, a new friend of mine from Wales: he has been staying here with Hermione and I and has been welcoming enough to accept my invite before he...goes back to Wales in September."

There was a gasp that did not go unnoticed at the mention of Thomas' surname, especially by Ginny who seemed entranced by the boy: he looked no older than Harry and yet, if it weren't for the black hair and hazel eyes, Ginny would swear that was Tom. However, before she could say anything, Thomas made an announcement of his own, "I'm afraid that's not entirely true Lord Evans: you see, my Father, Dante Riddle, has decided to formally continue my education and so, he is sending me to Hogwarts in September: all my necessary papers have been filled and, may I say, I look forward to being among such...distinguished witches and wizards as those here."

'So that's what you were up to,' thought Harry, remembering when, a week after his return, Tom had vanished for a few days and, when he had returned, all he would say was he had a surprise for Harry. Now he knew what it was and, as he looked from Tom to one particular seat, Harry gave a slow smile and nodded in mock agreement.

"I can't wait to see you there Thomas," he laughed, "I wonder where you will end up."

Ch 5 and Harry's right; I wonder where Thomas will end up; talk about a surprise, but what other surprises await in this meeting and dinner date?

Plus, what will Draco's answer be to Harry's offer and, in time, will Harry reveal who Tom really is to Lucius?

Keep Reading to Find Out;

Next Chapter: Dinner and Harry has a few choice words for his so-called best friend and none of them are friendly; Hermione makes her choice, but will she make the right one? Also, the end of summer brings a meeting for Harry from an old family friend and, to top it all off, there are Dementors on the Hogwarts Express;

Following Chapter: Hogwarts is different with a different Harry now within its walls, but can an unexpected ally help Harry find a Sanctuary in the School? Also, an AU sorting reveals two surprises for Hogwarts and, as his first week gets underway, Harry begins to see the difference between friend and foe, but what about those...closer to home?

Chapter 8: Hogsmeade and a very unlikely alliance; plus, lessons with Remus, tuition from Severus and some alone time with Hermione helps Harry to control the sudden maelstrom that burns within him, but will Dumbledore give up on the boy-Lord so easily? Also, our Shadow Lord wants a word with his newly-acquired allies about where they truly stand and Tom seems to have developed an unusual side-effect to his not-so-normal resurrection: something involving certain thoughts about a certain redhead...

Please Read and Review...

ADDED NOTE: You may remember my saying that the Dark Lord would return, but not how people think, but who should be the foundation for this return?

Lucius

Sirius

Severus

Tom Himself

Other?

Make your vote and say why or how you think it could happen: my own explanation will come very soon, but, if you read Perfect Lionheart's Partially Kissed Hero, you may find an idea of how in there;

Chapter 6: Darkness

White Angel Restaurant

After Tom, or Thomas, had made his announcement, Harry watched as the ex-Dark Lord sat back down, his hazel eyes almost shining with confidence as he caught Harry's eyes. With a slow smile, Harry then turned his attention to the rest of his party, "Now, before we become engulfed by our delicious meal, I wish to say a few more words: first, I want to thank all of you for showing some courtesy at being at the same table tonight. The reason that I formally invited Lord and Lady Malfoy as well as Lord and Lady Weasley is because, as of a few weeks ago, Lord Malfoy officially became my magical guardian, which, in essence, makes him a part of my family."

"Yeah, the dark part," whispered Ron, earning himself another cold glare from Harry, who ignored the comment as he continued.

"In September, when we all return to Hogwarts, or start in Thomas' case, I will not be the same Harry Potter you all knew a few months ago. Over the course of the summer, which has been the best one I have ever had, I have gained new powers, a new lease on my life and new members of my family. Now, earlier today, I approached the Young Heir Malfoy with a proposal: to rekindle our relationship to the point of at least being civil rather than fighting like a pair of school kids." Harry actually heard the gasp from a few members of the table as he looked to Draco and asked, "What is your answer, Heir Malfoy?"

Draco rose from his seat, walked around the table and stood next to Harry, his pure grey eyes showing only acceptance and honesty as he held out his hand and nodded, his voice calm and emotionless as he said, "To a fresh start."

Harry smiled, averted his eyes to the edge of his vision, nodded once and looked Draco in the eyes as he replied, "To a newfound allegiance."

The two shook hands; a gesture that wasn't unnoticed by those around them: Lucius, Narcissa, Astoria, Thomas, Hermione and Neville all applauded their honesty while the Weasleys all stared in shock, until Ginny joined in with the applause, hesitantly followed by the other Weasleys, save one.

Ron had a look on his face like Harry had just offered him a lifetime supply of dragon dung fertilizer; with a clear, attention seeking cough, he asked, "Harry, mate: you're not serious, right? Remember? He's a Malfoy, a Slytherin and a future dark wizard."

"I'm deadly serious," Harry answered, removing his hand from Draco's as he turned and asked, "And since when did I give you permission to address me by my name Weasley? Since when did I truly say that we were friends? And since when did I ask for your permission on who I can and can't become acquainted with?"

"I've always called you Harry," Ron answered, completely oblivious to what Harry was saying, "We became friends when we saved Hermione from the troll, even before then when you were sorted into Gryffindor and...well...it's Malfoy! Why make friends with someone who just wants you for your fame and fortune?"

"I made friends with you didn't I?"

The cold, sneering response had everyone staring at Harry with shock: his pure side was showing and, as he looked, Harry shook his head as he asked, "What? You thought I wouldn't figure it out? Get it through your head Ron, unless there's only room in there for your next meal: your family are purebloods, yet you openly talk about Platform nine and three quarters in a Muggle train station: why didn't you apparate?"

"Well we..." Ron began, but Harry cut him off as he continued.

"And how is it that, when you openly have sandwiches prepared for you on the train, you can afford brand-spanking new Dress Robes for tonight, new robes for our esteemed Head Boy – well done by the way," he added, looking to Percy, "And a new owl: were you trying to earn my favour? All along, Ron, and the rest of you: were you just in it for the money?"

The Weasleys stared at one another with horrified faces; only Fred, George and Ginny were straight-faced, but Mr and Mrs Weasley were speechless and Ron looked close to one of his tirades.

"Bill's old robes," laughed Harry, "Charlie's old wand and Percy's old rat? You have a son working for Gringotts and another working for

dragons and on top of all that, you still manage to afford robes and other materials for the New Year. I did have an ulterior motive in inviting you here tonight and it was so I could say this: you are never again permitted, ever, to call me Harry or call me your friend. So, if you don't mind, I, Lord Evans, would like you all to leave so that my guests and I can have a decent meal: good-day, you lying, worthless band of lecherous traitors."

As if they had been listening, a pair of wizards suddenly appeared and escorted the Weasleys out of the restaurant, leaving Harry to finally take his seat, the table magically shrinking to accommodate the eight people left sat round it. Heaving a sigh, Harry laughed and looked to Lucius as he asked, "Why do I get the feeling that I am going to regret that?"

Lucius, however, gave a curt nod and answered, "I wouldn't worry about it Lord Evans: if you leave it with me, I will make sure that the Weasleys never bother you again."

Harry nodded before he heaved a sigh and, looking to his guests, declared, "Bon appétit!"

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Hogwarts: Dumbledore's Office:

'That foolish boy: how dare he go against my wishes!'

Albus Dumbledore, to say the least, was very unhappy with what had happened over the summer: first, Harry didn't return to Privet Drive, which meant that his magic was not suppressed by the ward placed on the house; second, he openly announced that he wanted a new guardian and chose Lucius Malfoy of all people; third, following what Dumbledore had just heard, Harry had ostracized the Weasleys and now Dumbledore was being investigated by Gringotts Council under the charge of a Level 5 Fraud Claim: Unauthorized access to the financial status of a High Lord.

'Harry must realise that what I am doing is for his own good,' thought Dumbledore, 'I have done everything I can to stop that boy discovering his true power, so where did he get it?'

Rising from his seat, the old man looked to Fawkes, the phoenix turning his head away from the old man as he preened his feathers: while Dumbledore didn't hold the phoenix as a familiar anymore, the majestic bird was there as Harry's eyes and ears and, given that he was the familiar of Lord Gryffindor and Lord Slytherin, he was protected by the ancient magic of the Founders. This meant that Dumbledore couldn't harm the bird without paying for it himself, nor could he command the winged creature any longer.

"You," hissed the old man, "If it wasn't for you, Harry would be dead, but thanks to you, he's alive, a Lord and more powerful than I wanted; I don't know whether to thank you or hate you."

"You can't really do either," a cold, ghostly voice answered, making the old man wheel around in shock: the voice had seemingly come from all around him, but there was no-one there.

"Who are you to say that?" asked Dumbledore, before a deep, almost bracing cold filled the air and, with a gasp, the old man fell back into his chair, his eyes wide with shock as he exclaimed:

"No; Not you..."

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September 1st:

By 10:00am, Harry was already up, packed, washed, dressed in his finest robes and busily reading through one of the many notebooks he had picked up from Diagon Alley, carefully revising the notes that he had made throughout the summer on his many different abilities. Across the room, Tom packed the last of his own things into his trunk and pulled out a long black wand from his pocket, strapping it to a holster on his wrist.

The new wand, now owned by Thomas Riddle, was yew, just like his old wand, but this one was nine and a half inches and had a core made from unicorn horn and dragon's blood. When it had chosen him, Harry had been surprised: only one wand would ever work the same for any wizard at one time, which was what made each wand so unique, so why hadn't Tom been forced to find his old wand?

'Is it because he's not Voldemort any longer?' the young lord asked himself, watching as the Riddle teen seemed to follow his lead and began to read through his own work.

Shaking his head, Harry returned to his notes, finding the section on the magical side of his inheritance:

Magical Abilities Inherited

Gryffindor: TF Mastery, Occlumency Mastery, Legilimency Mastery

Slytherin: Dark Arts Mastery; Earth-Magic Affinity; Parseltongue; Potions Mastery

Evans: Charmcaster; Lightning Magic Affinity; Elementalist of Lightning; Animagus Ability; Avian-Speak

Potter: Dragon Magic/Advanced Parselenic Ability: Fire Magic Affinity: Elementalist of Fire

Animagus Forms: Phoenix

With a slow smile, Harry realised, for the first time, just how strong he was: two elements under his command while three elemental magic subjects were his to master; combined with his Animagus abilities and mastery of his magical potential, the young wizard knew that things were going to get interesting for the days ahead.

"Harry?"

The sound of Hermione's voice made Harry look up; she was dressed in her Gryffindor Hogwarts Robes, her messy hair now, through some miracle, brushed flat and tied behind her head. When she saw Tom there, Hermione nodded once and looked back at Harry as she explained, "I've tried to think of many different ways to say this, so I'll just come right out."

She turned to Tom before continuing, "Harry told me everything; who you are and what you did for him; as much as I fear you, I have only thanks for you after all that you've given to Harry, so..." she held out her hand and smiled with acceptance as she asked, "Friends, Riddle?"

Tom looked once to Harry, who nodded and watched as he walked over to her, taking her hand in his and answering, "Friends, Granger, but please, call me Thomas."

"Okay," answered the Muggleborn, "And you can call me Hermione; now, Harry, I should warn you that the Weasleys are waiting downstairs: apparently, the Ministry has hired some cars to protect you from Black."

"But we won't be needing them," Harry told her, before he raised his voice and called, "Dobby!"

With a crack, the House Elf appeared and bowed to Harry as he asked, "How can I serve Lord Evans?"

"Take all our things straight to Hogwarts," commanded Harry, "Act as one of the Hogwarts Elves for now and remember what I asked of you."

"I remember Lord Evans," Dobby answered, before he vanished with another crack.

Moments later, the trunks belonging to the trio all vanished leaving Harry to smile with a confident gleam as he asked, "You want to go with them 'Mione?"

"I'll not take the risk," Hermione answered, watching as Harry held out his hand; looking to Tom, she then asked, "How about you?"

"I'll go with them," Tom answered, nodding to the door, "Keep an eye on things for you Harry; you two go on ahead."

"Good luck to you," laughed Harry, earning a laugh of response from the ex-Dark Lord as Tom left; moments later, Harry took Hermione's hand, noticing how she seemed to embrace his touch, and, with a soft smile, advised her, "Hold on."

With a pop, and a burst of his own magic, Harry Apparated the two of them to King's Cross, the pair of them arriving in what appeared to be an abandoned waiting room. Heaving a sigh, Harry chuckled to himself as he explained, "Good thing that this place was empty: if it wasn't for the Anti-Apparition wards around the school, I'd take us there myself."

"But you could anyway right?" asked Hermione, not realising that she was still holding onto Harry, "I mean, you are Lord of two Houses, so couldn't you bend that rule yourself?"

"Sure I could," Harry answered, releasing Hermione from his hold as he turned and, walking out of the waiting room, asked, "But who says that I want to?"

Passing through the barrier, Harry and Hermione were greeted by the familiar sight of the Hogwarts Express, its scarlet colour almost shining in the mid-morning sunlight that poured across the platform. Making their way onto the train, it wasn't long before a familiar voice called out to them, "Harry, Hermione; over here."

With a joint smile, the two Gryffindors made their way towards the sound of the voice, finding Neville Longbottom waiting in the doorway of a compartment; looking around, the third year asked, "Where's Thomas?"

"Travelling with the unworthy," Harry answered as Neville opened the door, allowing them both to enter. When they did, both Harry and Hermione were surprised to find that, for the first time in their experience, an adult was travelling with them. He was a fairly tall man with grizzled greying hair; what hair still had colour looked like a light shade of brown; the man was also dressed in what appeared to be a set of fine, but worn, casual robes bearing the sign of a dog crossing the crescent moon. When he turned to Harry and Hermione, the man smiled and nodded once, revealing a pair of light brown eyes that seemed to fill with warmth as he looked at Harry. On closer inspection, the young lord then noticed that the stranger seemed to bare a variety of small scars on his face and neck, some of which seemed to be self-inflicted.

'Who is this man?' he thought to himself, 'And why does he make my skin crawl yet make my heart warm?'

"Hello Harry," the man finally spoke; he seemed to possess a light, warm voice that seemed to try and hide the demons he had faced, "It's nice to finally meet you."

"You know me sir?" asked Harry, looking around; his eyes finally settled on a brown, shabby-looking trunk overhead, covered in many

different markings; across one corner was a name: Professor R J Lupin. With wide eyes, Harry turned back and asked, "R-Remus?"

"Yes," answered the man, before he spread his arms and asked, "Well, can't I get a hug of welcome from my ward?"

Harry cautiously stepped towards Remus, before allowing himself to be embraced by the man, his emerald eyes trying and failing to hide tears of welcome and family. This man, who looked like he'd been in the wars, was the same man his Father knew and trusted with his life; the same man that would now be the ticket to Harry's official freedom from the Dursleys.

When he had finished acknowledging his freedom, Harry pulled back and wiped his eyes, looking to Remus as he asked, "What are you doing here?"

"Isn't it obvious?" laughed the elder man, "Vacant position, only adult on the train, our meeting today? Ringing bells yet Harry?"

"You're the new Defence Teacher," Harry nodded, smiling with praise as he asked, "And how do you know that I can allow you to call me Harry?"

"Because if you don't, then I'll send you back to the Muggles." Remus answered, watching as Harry blanched; moments later, he roared with laughter as he added, "Only kidding Harry; I know because of what you mean to me: I know that James' wish to grant you full emancipation has been seen to and I know that you are now Lord Evans. I also know how much you despise Dumbledore and I don't really care: Lily and James just wanted you to be happy and I'll be damned if I am going to be the one to stand in your way. So, out of respect and honouring what your Father gave to me, I know that I'll be perfectly safe calling you Harry."

"Good answer," laughed Lord Evans, his emerald eyes filling with light and fire as he added, "Does it bother you that I have turned away from Dumbledore and those I once called friends?"

"Not one bit," answered Remus, taking his seat; Harry sat next to him with Hermione and Neville opposite them. "Harry, as your Father said, if you go either way, Light or Dark, then know that I will always be proud of you and so will they."

Harry smiled at the comment, his eyes low as he thought about what he'd been told about Remus: how his Father had once been good friends with the man and how he was a man that James trusted with his life, even though it was clear that now it was Harry's life he was trusted with.

After confirming the man's thoughts about his newfound persona, Harry then explained about everything he had discovered, adding a thanks to Neville for the Dream Spinner, which, unknown to all of them, was secured to the inside of Harry's robe, providing the young wizard with a constant effect of relaxation. When Harry explained about his powers, Neville was the first to admit that he always suspected Harry was strong, but, when the boy wizard talked about his elemental powers, Remus nodded and suggested, "You know, with some help, we can have one of those mastered by the end of the year."

"But who would help?" asked Harry, watching then as a silhouette of red-heads passed the window, a familiar dark-haired companion moving away from them and onto the train.

"Well, what about Severus or Mr Malfoy?" Remus answered, his eyes shining as he added, "Heaven knows that old bat owes me a favour or two, not to mention the oath he owes your Father."

"Why does Professor Snape owe Harry's Father an oath?" asked Hermione, watching as Harry seemed to be drawn to the door of their compartment.

"He saved Severus' life," explained Remus, "A long time ago; the man was trying to find out where we kept disappearing off to; when he discovered it, let's just say that he was in the wrong place at the wrong time. James saved him and, against the hatred that Severus had for him, the snivelling git swore a life debt that James never did cash in on."

"No," smiled Harry, a cold, excited gleam appearing in his eyes as he added, "But I can: okay Remus, we'll speak to Snape about my teachings, but, only if the two of you are willing to put the past behind you and, instead of ruining my parents' good names, you honour them by helping me."

"You got yourself a deal Harry," smiled Remus, just as the door opened and Tom stepped in, his hazel eyes darkening dangerously as he looked from Harry to Remus.

"I swear," he growled, "If I get sorted into Gryffindor, I am going to kill Weasley: all the way here, all he did was complain about you and say how he was going to get you back for what you did."

"He can try," Harry replied calmly, before he added, "Now, introductions: Remus Lupin, meet Thomas Riddle; a new friend of mine who's coming to Hogwarts in his third year."

"Pleasure," Remus answered, his eyes watching Tom warily as he added, "And it's Professor Lupin, Mr...Riddle; an unusual name there."

"No relation to Him, Professor," Tom explained, noticing Harry suddenly becoming very interested in a spot on his robes. "My Father is Dante Lucian Riddle, a half-blood wizard from southern California; he moved to Wales and raised me after my Mother died. I met Harry over the summer and we became good friends: I consider it an honour to be a friend to the Lord of two Hogwarts Founders."

Remus smiled as he looked from his ward to the newcomer; it was obvious that Harry respected the teenager, but still, there was almost something more between them, like they knew each other more than new friends could. Putting it down to first impressions, Remus smiled again and asked, "Would you like to join us Mr Riddle?"

"Yes sir," Tom answered, seating himself next to Hermione, before he added, "And sir, can you call me Thomas? Mr Riddle is my Father."

Hermione and Harry suddenly burst into fits of laughter as Thomas used an obvious Muggle pun; thankfully, Remus understood and chuckled himself, nodding as he replied, "Okay; nice to meet you Thomas and, in private, it's Remus."

As the laughter died down, Tom then looked to Harry as he added, "Oh and Harry? I forgot to mention: Draco's looking for you; says he has a gift from his Father that will help with your problems."

Harry nodded, rose from his seat and looked to Remus, "Won't be long," he said, before leaving the compartment, weaving his way through the throng of students, glimpsing into each of the compartments until he stopped; opening the door, Harry asked, "Looking for me Draco?"

"Harry," Draco replied, a friendly smile on his face as he added, "Yes I was; come in, take a seat: move it you two."

As usual, Crabbe and Goyle obeyed without question as Harry took a seat opposite the Malfoy Heir; at the same time, the ground beneath their feet trembled as the Hogwarts Express began to leave King's Cross. When Crabbe and Goyle had managed to find a new seat, which actually involved them leaving the compartment, Draco then spoke up, "My Father extends his thanks, first off, for last night: that meal was delicious and the company was perfect."

"Before or after the Weasleys left?" asked Harry, his lips twitching with amusement.

"After, of course," answered Draco, "Anyway, onto other matters; it took some work, including a request from Severus, but Father managed to get you...this." He reached into his robe and pulled out a parchment, which was sealed with the Hogwarts Crest; handing it to Harry, he explained, "It's an Order of Resorting: with that, you can now openly, as High Lord of your Family and Lord of two Founders, choose to leave Gryffindor and go anywhere you want. Or, you can officially decree that you wish to stay a Gryffindor, but once that is done, there is no turning back. So, Harry, Lord Slytherin, what do you say?"

"Wand or parchment?"

"Wand," answered Draco, before he watched as Harry pulled his wand from his robe and opened the parchment; inside was a sentence describing what Draco had just told him and below that was the words:

Upon his magic, Lord Harry James Slytherin-Gryffindor-Evans-Potter alias Lord Evans, decrees that he wishes...

Placing his wand below the sentence, Harry announced, "Upon my magic, I, Lord Harry James Evans, do decree that I wish to be

resorted from the House of Gryffindor to that of my ancestor: I hereby decree myself to be a SLYTHERIN!"

A flash of emerald and silver filled the compartment before Harry watched as the Slytherin Crest was burned into his robe as well as the parchment, officially marking him as a member of the Serpent's Den. Folding up the letter, Harry then asked, "What about Neville and Hermione?"

"I thought you'd ask that," Draco answered, now able to speak so calmly with Harry, "My Father told me of a second chamber within Hogwarts: apparently, this one is one that only the Heir of Slytherin, or Lord Slytherin, can find: it's known as the King Cobra Caverns and was used as a resting place, study area and socialising space for the guests and friends of Salazar Slytherin. However, only the Lord knows where it is and it won't show on any map. Alternatively, of course, you could tap into Hogwarts' magic and change the Chamber of Secrets into a fifth dorm for you and your friends; heck, even I'll go down there."

"I'll think about it," Harry answered, rising from his seat as he added, "Thanks for the kind words Draco: who'd have thought we could have a civil conversation?"

"Not me," laughed Malfoy, "See you at the feast."

As he left the compartment, Harry gently rubbed his chest, feeling his heart race a million miles an hour: he was out of Gryffindor and out of danger, but Hermione wasn't. Yet, as he thought about how to help her, Harry then noticed that his palms seemed to slicken with sweat and heat seemed to rush to his cheeks. Why was it that he was more concerned with Hermione than he was with anyone else?

'And,' he thought, 'On the same level, what's going to happen when I join Slytherin?'

Both of them were very good questions: walking through the train, Harry soon found himself back with his friends, Hermione and the others gasping when Harry explained about what Lucius had done for him. When he revealed the Slytherin Crest now adorning his robes, Neville nodded with acceptance, Tom gave an amused laugh and Remus just smiled. Hermione, on the other hand, noticed how

Harry's eyes were filled with his painful dilemma on her safety and that of his friends.

However, before she could ask him what he was thinking about, the train suddenly gave a funny jolt and Hermione looked around, her eyes narrowed with confusion as she asked, "Why are we stopping? The Hogwarts Express never stops: we can't be there yet."

Remus was the first to notice it: as they waited, the windows of the compartment suddenly began to mist up, obscuring their view of the world outside; with a troubled voice, he whispered, "Everyone, think of something happy and, when I tell you, get down!"

"What is it Professor?" asked Neville, his voice trembling as a wave of cold suddenly filled the compartment.

"Dementors," answered Tom, his own hazel eyes dark with worry as he asked, "But why are they here?"

"Probably looking for Sirius," Harry suggested, then noticing how his chest had seemed to clam up, like something was grasping at his heart. At the same time, a low whimpering noise filled his ears; opposite him, Neville was shaking with a mixture of cold and fear while Hermione had her eyes closed, her mouth moving, forming words that Harry interpreted as books, libraries, and Harry's freedom.

Looking to Remus, Harry hissed, "There has to be something we can do; isn't there a spell? I mean, Sirius isn't here so why are they?"

"Because the Ministry believe Black is coming to Hogwarts," answered Tom, "So the Dementors must have been asked to scan the train."

"Just think happiness," Remus repeated, "Concentrate on your parents Harry; think about anything."

At that moment, the cold feeling inside Harry's chest intensified to impossible levels and, as he stared, a large black cloak suddenly appeared outside the door; at the same time, Harry then heard a voice speaking in his mind, almost like how Tom had spoken to him.

/Darkness is here; darkness is here; feed on the darkness./

Then, as Harry wondered about what he had just heard, the door to the compartment opened and, the next thing he knew, Harry found himself staring into an endless darkness, a long, piercing scream filling his ears as he tried, with all his might, to stay conscious: at the same time, there was a sound: it was like water running down a gorge combined with the echo of a long dark tunnel.

'My parents,' thought Harry, 'My freedom; Remus; my powers; the vindication of this world; my Shadow Lord title...'

The next thing Harry saw, however, was the back of his eyelids, but the last thing he heard was the mysterious voice, its cold, chilling tone echoing in his mind;

/Darkness has come; darkness has come; become the darkness; feed the darkness.../

Unbeknownst to Harry, at the same time as the voice and his cold feeling, a mark had appeared on his back, a long black tendril of darkness carving the mark all the way down his spine before vanishing, leaving Harry to fall against the floor of the compartment, the Dementors suddenly backing away as the darkness finished crafting the mark:

A large, fire-breathing, skull-headed black dragon!

Ch 6 and what is the effect of darkness on Harry? How has this mysterious entity come to be and what is the purpose of the mark on his back?

Furthermore, was it just me or did the Dementors seem to target Harry specifically? Could it have something to do with his legacy?

Keep Reading to Find Out;

Next Chapter: Hogwarts is different with a different Harry now within its walls, but can an unexpected ally help Harry find a Sanctuary in the School? Also, an AU sorting reveals two surprises for Hogwarts and, as his first week gets underway, Harry begins to see the difference between friend and foe, but what about those...closer to home? And, to top it all off, Harry discovers Slytherin's King Cobra Caverns, but why does the puzzle only seem half-complete?

Following Chapter: Lessons with Remus, tuition from Severus and some alone time with Hermione helps Harry to control the sudden maelstrom that burns within him, but will Dumbledore give up on the boy-Lord so easily? Also, some hidden research in the Caverns reveals the origins of a new breed of allies for the Lord of Shadows, but will Harry accept them? And, to top it all off, Harry manages to craft some control over one of his elements, with surprising results...

Chapter 9: Hogsmeade and a very unlikely alliance; plus our Shadow Lord wants a word with his newly-acquired allies about where they truly stand and Tom seems to have developed an unusual side-effect to his not-so-normal resurrection: something involving certain thoughts about a certain redhead...

Please Read and Review...

You may remember my saying that the Dark Lord would return, but not how people think, but who should be the foundation for this return?

Lucius:

Sirius: 3

Severus: 1

Tom Himself: 1

Bella (thanks to StormyFireDragon) 1

Make your vote and say why or how you think it could happen: my own explanation will come very soon, but, if you read Perfect Lionheart's Partially Kissed Hero, you may find an idea of how in there;

Chapter 7: Snape, Sorting and Surprises

Hogwarts Express:

When warmth and comfort once again seeped into Harry's body, he found himself seemingly propped up against the wall of his compartment, a group of voices speaking from nearby.

"How did you do it?"

"It took many years to learn that spell, but it's the only thing they fear."

"Will Harry be okay?"

"He should be fine; he's a tough kid, just like his dad."

"Thanks Remus," Harry finally spoke up, looking through bleary eyes at the new Defence Teacher; opposite him, Tom was preparing what looked like a draught of some kind while Hermione was leaning eagerly against the shoulders of the young lord, her eyes full of shock at his awakening.

The sound of snapping brought Harry to full awakening, but it was only Remus snapping some pieces of chocolate and handing a piece to each member of the compartment. As he took the chocolate, Harry saw Tom hand him the draught, which he drank thankfully: sure enough, it was a Restorative Draught mixed in with what Harry could taste as ice-cold lemonade. Wiping his lips, he gave Tom a stare of curiosity to which the young wizard shrugged and explained, "Old country remedy for disorientation; how are you Harry?"

"Five-by-five," Harry replied, rubbing his temples with his free hand as he asked, "What happened? I remember the Dementors and then..." he groaned and gripped his head, a strange darkness suddenly swarming through him, giving him a monster headache.

Deciding to change the subject, Neville asked, "Was it just me or did they seem to target Harry?"

"They did," Harry explained, "And it also explains what I heard: I've faced a threat and a time of my life that very few people can attest to: the Dementors targeted me because of my ties to my past. They

feed on happiness and leave you feeling fear; I...I think that it..." he rubbed his eyes, banishing the start of a few tears as he explained, "I think...I heard my mum screaming."

Everyone gasped at that revelation, before Remus stood up and, walking to the door, told them, "If you'll excuse me, I need to see the driver: by the way," he laughed, noticing each of them still holding their chocolate, "I haven't poisoned that chocolate you know."

Taking their bites, Harry felt a renewed warmth spreading through his body; however, as he tried to remember anything more about what he had heard: not just his Mother's voice had rang in his ears, but also the cold, creepy sound of the darkness telling him to become darkness, to feed darkness. What did it mean and what did it have to do with him?

When no answers presented themselves, Harry's mind turned to the Dementors: thanks to the information that Tom had given him, he now knew what they were and, even better, he knew how to defeat them. But, if he went around telling anyone that he knew of the charm, then he would become a source of suspicion, especially from the one who had wanted to control his life. No, what he needed was someone who worked for neither side and yet, like his parents, like Sirius Black, worked only for his contentment.

He knew just the person...Remus: he could trust the man with his secret, so long as he used an oath on the man, and he could also ask for help with the charm, otherwise known as the Patronus Charm, because, if he'd heard right, then Remus, Professor Lupin, had knowledge of the spell as well: it was how he had driven the Dementors away and, as much as he wanted to know more about the darkness, Harry Potter was firmly sure on one thing:

He had no desire to hear his Mother's voice again, because, no matter what he did, he couldn't bring back the dead.

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Hogwarts School:

"What are they doing here?" whispered Hermione as the carriage that took them to Hogwarts passed two Dementors guarding the gates.

"It's like Remus said," explained Harry, feeling the familiar cold washing over him, "They're here looking for Sirius, but they fail to realise that the more they do to help, the more they're really doing to hurt."

Tom looked out of the window, his eyes cold and dark as he noticed the Dementors; looking from Harry to Hermione, he asked, "Mind if I share a secret?"

"Sure Tom," replied Harry, feeling warmth pass through him again as they passed the Dementors.

"Back there," Tom explained, "In the compartment with the Dementor, you all heard your worst fears, but me...I heard..."

Harry turned to his loyal follower, his green eyes darkening as he asked, "What did you see?"

"Well," Tom answered, "I didn't see it per se; I more...heard it: Harry, I heard...that night: I fear my own death."

"Well we all do," Harry told him, "But if it's any consolation, I also heard it and, let me say this much, if the link between us still exists, then that's why you heard it as well."

"Maybe," Hermione agreed, "But there is one other possibility."

Harry looked at her and urged her to continue, Tom still shuddering with the memory of what he'd heard; noticing this, Harry pushed out his magic, sending a comforting warmth through the carriage; when he was able to sit still, Tom looked at Harry and hissed, 'Thank you Shadow Lord.'

As Harry pushed his magic back in, Hermione continued with her explanation, "Well, this Tom is formed from his Horcrux, so maybe there are remnants of Harry and Tom's future self left in what he took from Harry. In other words..."

"It's Voldemort who fears death and not Tom Riddle," Harry realised, looking to his friend as he nodded in agreement, "I hate to say it Tom, but both sound right: it could be the Horcrux and it could also be the fact that our link still exists, but, whichever one is the truth, I

know in my heart and with all my magic that you will never betray me."

"Thank you Harry," Tom grinned, his eyes on the young Slytherin as he took a quick glance to the rapidly approaching Hogwarts structure.

When the carriages stopped, the first voice that Harry heard was not one he really wished to hear, "Potter, since you are now a member of my House, may I suggest that you hurry up and get inside?"

Turning towards the source of the voice, Harry looked at Severus Snape with the eyes of a man who had reached his limit; striding towards him, Harry called on the magic he now controlled as Lord of Gryffindor and Slytherin and summoned his sword to his hand. Holding it at his side, Harry spoke with the air and power of a true Lord.

"Listen carefully Severus Snape," he growled, the blade of his sword rippling with magic as he fuelled his emotion into his words, "As Lord of two Hogwarts Houses, know that I can openly decide who does and doesn't walk through those doors, which means that I can keep anyone I wish out of there, like you, for example. However, I think I have another idea: a little payback from my family."

"What are you talking about you arrogant child?" hissed Severus, but stopped when he saw the hilt of Harry's sword glowing with magic.

At the same time, Harry exclaimed, "I think it's time you repaid the debt owed to my parents Severus and you can do that by aiding in my training and acting as my second confidant within Hogwarts: as Lord of Slytherin, I call on Hogwarts and all her magic to bind Severus Snape to this..."

"Stop!" Severus pleaded, his body tense and his hands shaking; lowering his eyes, he continued, "Lord Evans, I know of the oath and debt that I once swore to your parents: if it is my help that you seek then, for the sake of your Mother, I will do just that. However, to repay the oath I owe your...Father, I, Severus Snape, hereby solemnly swear to guide and protect Harry James Potter, alias Lord Evans, until my dying day; so mote it be."

"So mote it be," Harry replied, aware of the magic flowing through them; at the same time, Harry asked, "So, what was it you were going to call me sir?"

"A worthy addition to Slytherin, Lord Evans," Severus replied, watching as Harry led the way up to the Great Hall. As they passed through, Severus then added, "Mr...Riddle, if you would please wait here: Professor McGonagall shall help sort you."

"Thank you Professor," Tom nodded, watching as Harry and Hermione made their way into the Great Hall. Passing through the large doors, Harry looked to Hermione and nodded once before he walked over towards the Slytherins, taking a seat next to Draco, the young Malfoy giving Harry a friendly smile for the first time ever.

Over on the Gryffindor Table, Harry watched as Hermione sat next to Neville while Ron, obviously trying to maintain some form of lasting friendship, sidled over to her and began to make idle conversation. Seconds later, Harry smiled to himself as he heard a loud slap from the Gryffindors, several of the Slytherins laughing as Ron quickly retreated from Hermione. Looking to Harry, the young Weasley gave a cold scowl before he mouthed, "You'll pay Potter."

Harry turned away from Ron and rested his arms on the table, his head in his hands as he stared into space; next to him, Draco asked, "Something wrong?"

"No," Harry answered, jerking his head as he added, "Just not going to bother wasting my time with Weasley and his prattle: however," he looked around the table as he added, "If anyone dares to even think of upsetting the few friends I have left in Gryffindor, then they will see for themselves just how strong I have become. Before you all ask about it, the ones I speak of are Neville Longbottom and Hermione Granger: upset them, insult them, even think of calling Hermione by that offensive name and I will show you what I can do with this."

He drew the Sword of Gryffindor for emphasis, before he looked around, each of the House members paying full attention to his every word: sheathing his sword, Harry then nodded and watched as the first years all entered, led by the soon-to-be third year Tom and Astoria Greengrass. As they walked past Harry, his eyes then narrowed as he caught sight of a girl who looked to be the same age

as Tom and Harry: she had short, mousy brown hair and a pair of light blue eyes; she looked around the room with a near nervous expression and, when she caught sight of Harry, she smiled and gave him a wink.

"Draco," whispered the young Slytherin, "Do you know who that is?"

Draco followed his eyes, before he gave a snort of amusement and commented, "Well I'll be the son of Slytherin: she's finally here, is she?"

"Who?" asked Harry, watching as the procession reached the head of the Great Hall, Professor McGonagall now placing the Sorting Hat down as Harry looked on.

"Her name's Nymphadora Tonks," Draco explained, "She's my Aunt Andromeda's daughter and an exile to the House of Black: but, if you value your bits, you won't call her by her first name: she hates it."

"Got it," laughed Harry, before the rim of the hat opened and the shabby item began to sing:

It has been five turns but its all the same

Now you children come to play this game

So come to me and see where you shall reside

For there's nothing in your head's that can try to hide

Be you strong of heart or hungry for power

This is your time, this is your hour

So now with your journey about to begin

Let's just see what skills lie within

Shall you go to Gryffindor where courage and friendship dwell

Or shall you be caught within the serpent's spell

If so then it is Slytherin where your destiny awaits

To make the friend of a snake is a truly honoured fate

Shall you be drawn by knowledge and neutral call

Then you hear Ravenclaw the House that welcomes all

Or shall you be weak and fearful, silent and unknown

If so then it is Hufflepuff that you shall call your new home

So now let's get on with things and I ask you not to fear

For I am the Hogwarts Sorting Hat and we're all in the same boat here

Finishing its song, even Harry was impressed: the hat seemed to deliver a message of encouragement and warmth that even Harry had to respect; shortly after, Professor McGonagall began to call out names in the same order that she had done when Harry had been Sorted. Reaching Astoria's name, the Lord of Slytherin watched as she shared Draco's fate: the hat had barely touched her head before it cried out, "SLYTHERIN!"

There were a few more students following Astoria into Slytherin, most of them looking like they were worthy of the placing while some were nervous and looked like they didn't want to be there.

"Riddle, Thomas!" exclaimed McGonagall and Harry snapped his head forwards; as he had expected, the familiar silver beard of Albus Dumbledore suddenly shone off the light from the torches as the students waited. Looking to his vassal, Harry waited patiently for the result, noticing how he had suddenly become nervous: what if, because he had been done before, the hat didn't recognise Tom?

"SLYTHERIN!" Cried the Sorting Hat and Harry breathed a sigh of relief, watching as his loyal follower took a seat next to Lord Slytherin, Draco on his right hand side.

"Well done Thomas," Harry whispered, "I always had faith in you."

"Thanks Harry," remarked Tom, "I can't wait to tell Father about this."

'No,' thought Harry, an amused smirk on his face, 'Neither can I.'

After Tom had been sorted, there were a few more names: Ryuki – Ravenclaw; Sanderson – Gryffindor; Shaw – Gryffindor; Stark – Ravenclaw; Stein – Slytherin before McGonagall cried, "Tonks, Nymphadora!"

There were a few sniggers at the name, but Harry felt his fists clenching, a strong sense of hope rising inside him as he waited. 'Anywhere but Gryffindor,' he thought, noticing how Ron seemed to hold an amused glare in his eyes, 'Please Salazar, anywhere but...

"GRYFFINDOR!"

Draco sighed as he asked, "What are you going to do? I saw that look in your eyes Harry, but I can tell you now, she's no Slytherin, no matter where she comes from."

"Then I guess I'm no Slytherin either?" asked Harry, rising from his seat; looking up to him, Draco watched as he walked across to the Gryffindor Table, an expression of delight appearing on Ron's face.

"Harry," he smiled, "Glad you saw sense mate: welcome back."

"Piss of Weasley," snapped Harry, walking past the red-head and over towards Tonks; she was sat next to Hermione, which was lucky because Harry wanted to speak to her as well. Stopping behind them, Harry asked, "Tonks, right?"

"Yes," replied the first-year, correcting Harry as she added, "And I'm a third-year transfer from Beauxbatons Academy: my Mother didn't want me coming here, but, with our move, I almost had to beg her. And you would be him, right? Harry Potter?"

"That's me," Harry replied, "Lord of Gryffindor, Slytherin and Evans Houses: listen Tonks; there are certain members of this House who will try and make it their duty to make your life miserable: now, this is an open invitation, but, since you're here with Hermione, I'm going to say it."

He held out his hand and announced, "If you ever, and I do mean ever, need a friend you can trust outside of Gryffindor, then, even though I am a Slytherin, I would like you to give me the chance to be that friend. Especially since I also happen to have a private residence within the castle that my friends are free to use."

Tonks looked to him with eyes of shock; Harry, however, was the one who became shocked as, when he nodded at her, he saw her mousy-brown hair suddenly change both colour and style: now it was jet black and shoulder-length, Tonks reaching out and taking Harry's hand as she said, "I'd be delighted: oh, and as for the hair, I'm a Metamorphmagus: I can change my appearance at will: it's a pleasure to meet you, Lord Gryffindor-Slytherin."

"It's Lord Evans," Harry corrected her, "But to my friends, it's Harry: now remember, anytime; just speak with our new Defence Teacher and he'll see I get the message."

With that, Harry walked back to the Slytherin Table, unaware that, as he walked back, Hermione and Tonks were watching him with eyes of wonder and graciousness. Seating himself back with his allies, Harry laughed to himself as he saw the Slytherins all looking at him like he had two heads while Tom, watching as the last member of the first years was sorted, asked, "Making friends again Harry?"

"Well," Harry replied slyly, "Just because I'm Lord of Slytherin and a Slytherin doesn't mean I need to ignore my Gryffindor side."

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Slytherin Dormitory:

By some stroke of luck, Harry, Draco, and Tom were all placed in the same dorm, the three Slytherins all satisfied with this arrangement, especially Draco: ever since he had first been introduced to the young Riddle back at Harry's special dinner, he had found a liking to the teen. Plus, he was a close friend of Lord Slytherin and that wasn't someone you wanted as an enemy: the third-year dorm was decorated in shifting shades of silver and emerald, the three four-poster beds decorated with the Slytherin Crest, three serpents coiling around the Crest as if to register the third years. Taking the middle bed, Harry looked to his dorm-mates

as he asked, "So, since I didn't ask already, what electives did you two pick?"

"Tuition in Potions," Draco replied, "As well as Care of Magical Creatures and Ancient Runes; when I was offered a final elective, I kept it blank so that I have time to relax."

"I chose Care of Magical Creatures as well," Tom added, "But I decided to take Defence Tuition and Divination and then, like Draco, kept the last block free for some relaxation time."

"Looks like we all had the same idea then," Harry explained, "I also have Care of Magical Creatures, but I decided to take Tuition in both Charms and Potions as well as Ancient Runes."

"Harry!" gasped Draco, "You'll be ready to drop before the term is done: go and speak with Professor Snape about dropping one, but choose Potions and you'll be safer in Gryffindor," he added with a laugh.

Harry, sat on the end of his bed, sighed and realised, with some strange sensation that Draco was right: he chose to keep Care because Hagrid was a good friend and he could keep an eye on the Gryffs; it had been Hermione who had recommended Ancient Runes and he wanted to take Potions Tuition to prove to Severus that he was no longer the little brat he'd once known.

'Even still,' thought Harry, 'With the mastery I inherited from my four Houses, Charms and Potions will be easier; Draco's right.'

"All right," he nodded, "I'll go and find him."

Leaving the common room, Harry made his way along the dungeon corridor, making his way to the Potions classroom: if Severus could always make an appearance from in there, then his chamber had to be nearby. Stopping before the class, Harry tried the door and found it locked; heaving a sigh, he opted for Plan B.

"Dobby!"

The familiar crack sounded and Harry looked down, his loyal House Elf bowing to his master, "Lord Evans sir; how can I help you?"

"Where might I find Professor Snape's office?" asked Harry, his eyes showing that he really needed sleep, but this was important.

"This way sir," Dobby answered, leading Harry further down, towards a portrait showing what appeared to be an alchemist brewing gold from lead; turning to Harry, Dobby asked, "Shall I inform Professor Snape of your arrival sir?"

"Please do," Harry answered, 'Especially since I don't know his password.' He added in thought, a smile crossing his face as he thought of the cheesy cliché with Snape's portrait.

A few seconds after Dobby vanished, the portrait swung open and Professor Snape stepped out, his eyes on Harry as he asked, "Yes Mr Potter, is there something I can do for you?"

"Actually sir, there is," answered Harry, nodding past the Potions Master as he asked, "Would you mind if we discuss this inside sir?"

Severus stepped aside, allowing Harry to enter the chamber; it was like a mini-apartment: a kitchen and lounge were mixed into one, a second door leading to what Harry guessed was Severus' quarters and a study. Offering Harry a seat, Severus then seemed to change his tone as he asked, "So, what seems to be the problem Harry?"

'At least he can use my name without sounding like he's glued his jaws together,' thought Harry, leaning forwards in his seat as he spoke.

"Well sir, after discussing it with my fellow third-years, I have decided that I would like to drop Charms Tuition and instead use the time for myself."

"I see," Severus nodded, a smile crossing his face as he asked, "And did my godson and your new friend Mr Riddle have anything to do with this?"

"Maybe a little," admitted Harry, "But what I want to know is: can it be done even though the year has started?"

"Yes," Severus answered, "And, since you are so determined to keep your Potions elective, I will also arrange it so that the three of

you share your free time: you have developed another little Trio here Harry; my compliments."

Harry couldn't help but reply, "Thank you sir and I also wish to thank you for finally accepting me for who I am; not for being James Potter's son."

"I understand," Severus nodded, before he walked over to a desk and, reaching into a drawer, pulled out a parchment, which he handed to Harry. "This was sent to me earlier by Professor Lupin; it explains about your Dementor problem and how you would like my help with your studies: tell me Harry, what is it you wish to know?"

As if to answer his question, Harry reached into his robe and pulled out his list of abilities, before handing it to Severus:

Magical Abilities Inherited

Gryffindor: TF Mastery, Occlumency Mastery, Legilimency Mastery

Slytherin: Dark Arts Mastery; Earth-Magic Affinity; Parseltongue; Potions Mastery

Evans: Charmcaster; Lightning Magic Affinity; Elementalist of Lightning; Animagus Ability; Avian-Speak

Potter: Dragon Magic/Advanced Parselenic Ability: Fire Magic Affinity: Elementalist of Fire

Animagus Forms: Phoenix

Indicating the list, Harry explained, "I wish to know about my elemental powers and the magic of the dragons; plus, I would like to know some more about Slytherin, like the location of the King Cobra Caverns."

"The first two," Severus explained, "I can arrange to help you study; as for the Caverns, only the True Heir, whom is you, can find those caverns: all I can say is this: let your heart and legacy guide you. Also," he added, eyeing the list, "I will help you study Occlumency and Legilimency to the point where, no matter the strength of mind, you cannot be detected and neither can your defences."

"Deceptive," Harry grinned, but nodded to his professor as he added, "Thank you sir...I mean, Severus; I'll see you at breakfast."

As Harry got up to leave, Severus then added, "If you ever need anything, my password is Veritaserum; I'll be here: good night Harry."

"Good night sir," Harry replied, leaving the chamber and returning to the Slytherin Common Room.

Ch 7 and I bet no-one was expecting that: Tonks at Hogwarts and this story turning into a Severitus; okay, maybe the second, but that's why I enjoy writing:

Anyway, what will happen when Harry introduces his Slytherin allies to his Gryffindor companions?

Also, can he, Draco, Tom and Hermione manage to locate the Caverns before Harry is pushed too far?

Keep Reading to Find Out;

Next Chapter: As his first week gets underway, Harry begins to see the difference between friend and foe, but what about those...closer to home? And, to top it all off, Harry discovers Slytherin's King Cobra Caverns, but why does the puzzle only seem half-complete? Maybe the answer to that lies on Harry's new TATTOO or maybe it lies in the other half of his Hogwarts Heritage: Gryffindor! Plus, Tonks speaks with Harry about Sirius and how she wants to help Harry: can she be trusted with his secret?

Following Chapter: Lessons with Remus, tuition from Severus and some alone time with Hermione helps Harry to control the sudden maelstrom that burns within him, but will Dumbledore give up on the boy-Lord so easily? Also, some hidden research in the Caverns reveals the origins of a new breed of allies for the Lord of Shadows, but will Harry accept them? And, to top it all off, Harry manages to craft some control over one of his elements, with surprising results...

Chapter 10: Hogsmeade and a very unlikely alliance; plus our Shadow Lord wants a word with his newly-acquired allies about where they truly stand and Tom seems to have developed an unusual side-effect to his not-so-normal resurrection...

Chapter 11: Draco finds out! How will he react knowing who Tom really is – or was – and can he be trusted to keep his silence from his Father? Plus, Harry and his new band of allies discover a secret about Harry's Hogwarts Heritage and the Shadow Lord meets with an unlikely accomplice...

Please Read and Review...

Now, here's a question: with our surprise sorting, should I...

Keep this a Harry/Hermione and have Tom/Tonks

OR

Turn this into a Harry/Tonks and make it a Tom/Hermione?

ALSO:

You may remember my saying that the Dark Lord would return, but not how people think, but who should be the foundation for this return?

Lucius:

Sirius: 3

Severus: 1

Tom Himself: 1

Bella (thanks to StormyFireDragon) 1

Make your vote and say why or how you think it could happen: my own explanation will come very soon, but, if you read Perfect Lionheart's Partially Kissed Hero – end of Ch 5 and through Ch 6; you may find an idea of how in there;

Chapter 8: An Unholy Alliance

Hogwarts:

The following morning, Harry, Tom and Draco all travelled down to the Great Hall together, the three of them as ever vigilant and ever friendly as they had been from their dinner together. With his mind set on his first week of lessons, as well as his additional mentoring from Severus, Harry was actually surprised to realise that, despite everything they had gone through two years previous, he was actually looking forwards to studying and just killing time with the Malfoy Heir.

Opening the large oak doors into the Great Hall, Harry's excited mood became tinged with darkness as he looked over to the Gryffindor Table: almost immediately, he saw the Weasleys and the other third years all sat together, laughing and joking, Ron helping himself to breakfast while, further down the table, Hermione, Neville and Tonks were all sat alone, their robes heavily creased and messed up, Hermione's eyes slightly red and puffy from what Harry then noticed to be tears.

With a snarl, he turned to Draco, "Go to the table without me: I'll be there in a moment."

Draco nodded and Tom gave a hum of agreement as he saw where Harry was looking; as they walked over to the Slytherin Table, Harry flicked his wrist once and summoned the Sword of Gryffindor to his hand, trying his hardest not to give in to the temptations he was experiencing to slice all of Gryffindor House into shreds.

Striding past the laughing students, Harry stopped next to the Gryffindor Trio and, leaning down, asked, "What happened?"

"Weasley," answered Tonks, looking to Harry, who noticed a bruise on her cheek, "He said we were traitors to side with Slytherins and convinced the whole House to exile us; then, as we were on our way to breakfast, they jumped us."

"Did they?" asked Harry, his emerald eyes now on the other Gryffindors, who seemed to have finally noticed his presence at the table. Shaking his head, Harry added, "I'm sorry Tonks: your first night and you taste the pain and humiliation associated with this

inter-House rivalry. Out of curiosity," he directed his attention to Hermione as he asked, "Did Professor McGonagall do anything to help? Did she even come and see why you were being attacked in such a Muggle way?"

"No," answered Hermione, rubbing her eyes to dismiss the tears, "I went to see her before you came through the door and all she could say was that she would deal with it. Harry," she leaned against him as Harry took a seat next to her, "She considers me her top student and one of the brightest witches of my age, or at least she said that to me last year, but now, because of this, because of you and your friendship with us, she doesn't want to know."

Harry slowly ran a hand through Hermione's hair, using his other hand to slowly lower his Sword, his emerald eyes full of conflicting emotions: on one hand, he wanted McGonagall to remember just who really commanded Gryffindor House while, on the other hand, he wanted to be there for his friends and still maintain the sense of maturity that he had said he needed to show.

Looking over to the Head Table, Harry saw Remus and Severus both watching him while next to the new Defence Teacher, Professor McGonagall looked like Christmas had come early and, next to her, Dumbledore had a beaming, welcoming smile on his face, those blue eyes of his twinkling.

'You bastards,' thought Harry, a sudden ripple of magic flowing from his body, 'You knew they'd be targeted because they're friends with me: well, I think I'll play your little game myself.'

Pulling away from Hermione, Harry looked to Tonks and Neville before he explained, "Second Floor bathroom; dinnertime: if you want to escape more of this, meet me there."

"Will do," Tonks nodded, her hand slowly pressing on the bruise that adorned her cheek, "But what's there Harry?"

With a swift, almost purpose-driven glare to the other Gryffindors, Harry clenched his fists as he answered her question with one word:

"Sanctuary."

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Great Hall: Head Table:

"Severus," Remus whispered to the Potions Master, both of them watching as Harry returned to the Slytherin Table, not bothering to hide the fact that his sword was trailing across the floor. "Did you feel that?"

"Yes," Snape answered, looking to his colleague, "Last night, Lupin, Harry came to visit me and asked for my help with additional mentoring, but, if what I just felt is real and is indeed within Harry, then we shall both need to teach him. This means that..."

"I know," Remus whispered, "Harry will have to learn my secret: but where did this power come from?"

"That," Severus answered, his cold eyes on his student, "I do not know."

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Slytherin:

"So you're going back there again?" asked Tom when Harry had explained what he'd learned, "Do you want me to come with you?"

"No," Harry answered, looking to Draco; thankfully, the Malfoy Heir was deep in conversation with Astoria Greengrass, "I can't have people figuring out who you are Tom: Hermione is the only one, so far, who knows your true identity: however, if you can act shocked to see the place, then I will need you and Draco to be there with me."

Tom heaved a sigh as he looked up at the Head Table, his eyes on each of the teachers, "Good thing it's Sunday," he commented, "We have all the time we need."

"Perhaps," Harry agreed, his fists still clenched tightly together, his right hand clasped around the hilt of his sword as he added, "But I need to let go of this anger before I do something I'll later regret."

"Flying?" suggested Draco, obviously catching the back end of the conversation.

"Perhaps," Harry replied, looking up towards the ceiling of the Great Hall, a part of him actually happy to see a misty fog creeping in across the sky as he added, "Or maybe I'll go for a walk down by the lake: see Hagrid."

Rising from his seat, Harry gave his friends a smile as he added, "See you later."

Walking out of the Great Hall, he turned and walked out across the courtyard, the September cold filling his lungs with air and almost freezing his rage as he walked across the bridge that connected the courtyard with the outer edge of the school. Standing on the other side, his body leaned on a giant stone slab, Harry looked down at Hagrid's hut, recalling the information that they had been told.

Hagrid was going to be the new Care of Magical Creatures mentor, which was all right by Harry as he did have some small shred of respect still held within him for the giant man. Therefore, lessons with him would actually be fun and, even though Harry feared that he would have that lesson with the Gryffindors, he decided that he wasn't ready to exile everything from his old life. Hagrid was a friend, he hadn't – in a crazy sense – lied to Harry and had always been there to speak to whenever the now Slytherin student needed a friend.

Walking down the winding path, Harry's eyes came upon a strange sight tied in the paddock behind Hagrid's home: it looked, at first, like a cross-breed between a hawk and a horse: its upper body was covered with grey and silver flecked feathers that seemed to blend in with the fog around them: its head was slightly bigger than a regular hawk and, when it looked at Harry, it inclined its head before lowering itself, its sharp beak preening its feathers. As Harry stood there transfixed, he then saw two pairs of clawed feet beneath the body, as well as a pair of large, beautiful grey wings protruding from its body.

Recalling his heritage, Harry calmed his mind and reached for the winged creature, deciding that now was a better time than any than to attempt his Avispeak. When he reached out, Harry found an almost feral mind that was tinged with a sense of loyalty, but, at a guess, the young Slytherin could only think that he needed to earn that loyalty.

/Good morning winged one,/ he sent through his mind, /I am Harry Potter, also Lord Evans and Heir of Gryffindor and Slytherin: if I may be so bold, you are a truly beautiful creature./

/Thank you Shadow-Heart,/ replied a clear voice, its tone ringing in Harry's mind, the name it used confusing the boy, before it continued, /I sense you wish to know more about me: well, as your large one will tell you, I am a Hippogriff, a winged creature who hunts and lives in flocks, but was chosen amongst my kind to come to this castle for your teachings. The large one even gave me a name: I am Buckbeak and I am honoured to meet you in person Shadow-Heart./

/Why do you call me that?/ asked Harry, looking to Buckbeak as the Hippogriff rose again, flaring its wings as if trying to catch a breeze.

/You have darkness in you Shadow-Heart,/ replied the winged creature, /Darkness that is evenly matched by your light and your power: I cannot tell you much more than this: if you have the Mark, then it makes you the One. I cannot say much more than that, but I feel ready to call you friend: feel free to approach me Shadow-Heart./

Stepping into the paddock, Harry gingerly held out his hand, watching as Buckbeak trotted towards him, the beak of the bird-horse hybrid touching the tips of Harry's fingers. Seconds passed before Harry slowly ran his hand over Buckbeak's feathery mane, his eyes wide with awe as he stood there before, with a low voice, he whispered, "Call me Harry...Buckbeak."

"Blimey!" exclaimed a deep voice, making Harry wheel round: Hagrid was stood on the edge of the paddock, a slab of raw meat in his hands as he looked from Harry to Buckbeak, "Harry, 'ow on earth did yeh get Beaky to trust yeh so easily?"

"I guess I'm just gifted, Professor," smiled Harry, watching as Hagrid entered, the slab of meat being lay before Buckbeak as he stepped back.

"Ain't he beau'iful?" asked Hagrid, smiling at the Hippogriff, "Yeh really do 'ave the touch Harry: normally, a Hippogriff needs yeh teh bow afore he let's yeh touch 'im: ah, well, yeh'll learn all abou' that when yeh attend me first lesson on Tuesday. Oops," he added,

giving Harry a wink as he muttered, "I shouldn't have told yeh that, eh 'Arry?"

"Yeah," replied Harry, smiling at Hagrid as he watched Buckbeak digging into the meat, both Harry and Hagrid turning away from the paddock to allow the Hippogriff to enjoy his breakfast.

/Come back soon Harry,/ Buckbeak whispered in his mind, /We can go flying together./

/I'd like that,/ Harry replied, a part of him actually noticing how he felt better than he had when he'd walked out of the school, /Until then./

Walking with Hagrid back into his hut, Harry had to lean down as Fang leapt up and started slobbering over his face; stroking the large boarhound, Harry then looked to Hagrid as he said, "I'm sorry I haven't been to see you since the events in the Chamber Hagrid; I've been busy."

"I know," Hagrid replied, pouring a pot of tea into a pair of mugs, "Yeh did right in rescuing Ginny, Harry, but personally, I wish yeh hadn't."

"Why's that?" asked Harry, noticing, for the first time, how different Hagrid was: whenever he said something he shouldn't have, he was always nervous, but now? Now he was changed and openly speaking with Harry; one hand still stroking Fang's drooling form, Harry added, "You sound like you usually do Hagrid: like you have something to hide."

"Me?" asked Hagrid, a note of shock in his voice, "Nah Harry; I just want yeh to be yourself: the reason I say that is because of what I heard from Dumbledore. Harry, yeh'll never believe this, but I don't think he's as trustworthy as they say."

"You don't say?" asked Harry, looking to the gamekeeper, "Why do you think that?"

"He was the one who said Sirius escaped teh come after you," Hagrid explained, "But 'e's lyin' Harry: Sirius and I knew each other when 'e was at Hogwarts. A nicer man and a dearer friend to yeh parents than I ever knew. Sure, 'e had his dark side, but that was cos of what he became as a member of the Marauders. Harry, no

matter what, I want you to promise me that you won't do anything rash: if you meet Sirius, know that he cares fer yeh like no-one else and also know that if yeh ever need to talk, I'll be 'ere."

"Thanks Hagrid," Harry smiled, embracing the man in a hug, Fang climbing down from his lap as Harry then stood up and, with a sigh, added, "You know what? I feel a heck of a lot better now: thanks Hagrid, see you in lesson...Professor."

He heard Hagrid chuckling to himself as Harry left the hut, making his way back up to the school, his mind abuzz with what he had learned: it had been Dumbledore who told the world that Sirius was after Harry and that meant that, even though he seemed to have their best interests at heart, the old man was playing the whole world like a game of chess.

'I think it's time I introduce a new player into this game,' thought Harry, his emerald eyes burning with their swarming fire as he returned to Hogwarts.

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Chamber of Secrets:

At dinnertime, Harry waited patiently for Hermione, Tonks and Neville to turn up, his magical senses on high alert as he recalled the ambushes taken upon them. Behind him, the open sinks leading down into the chamber seemed to howl with a non-existent breeze that blew through the tunnels and up into the bathroom.

All in all, Harry found himself feeling more ready than ever to return to the Chamber and, after beginning his plans to introduce his new player, Harry had made sure that no-one, not even Tom, knew of his true intentions.

Like he had once said to the ex-Dark Lord: "Let's just say that I think it's time for the Dark Lord to return to the world, but not how they think he will."

For this to work, Harry needed three things: first, he needed the full trust and domination over the Gryffindor Trio – Neville, Tonks and Hermione – as well as their full co-operation and willingness to follow him into the throes of darkness.

Second, he needed to discover what it was about the Dementors that had made him feel so cold, so inhuman, so...dark that he had developed a real mean streak as long as Dumbledore's beard.

Third and finally, he needed time: this was the important one: with enough time, at the most all of his third year, Harry would be able to set his own pieces on Dumbledore's little chess board and, with help from his power as Heir of Gryffindor and Slytherin, begin the transformation Hogwarts needed: from a school of mindless puppets – with the exceptions of the Slytherins – to a school of Scions for both Light and Dark, all the while having a third party ready to serve him: the Shadow Lord.

And, to his own surprise, Harry reasoned that the first part of his timescale was to gain the allegiance of one Sirius Black and discover the truth about his parents' deaths. Once he made sure that he had Sirius' allegiance, then Harry would have the ear of the most influential pureblood family in the wizarding world: the Noble and Ancient House of Black, the primary family that Draco and Tonks originated from.

Now, it was just a matter of patience and Harry, deciding to take Hagrid's advice, actually knew that the best way to do that was to focus on his new powers while using his lessons to heighten and prove his Mastery over Transfiguration, Charms, Potions and the Dark Arts.

"Harry?"

The sound of Hermione's voice snapped the young Lord out of his reverie: looking up, he saw not only Hermione, but Tonks, Neville, Tom and Draco, the young Astoria Greengrass standing with the Slytherins, her arm around her betrothed. Nodding his welcome to each of them, Harry spoke up, "I see we have a few extra guests here today: anyway, earlier, as you know, certain members of Gryffindor House decided to attack my three friends here simply for being my friends. This act of inter-house violence is something that I will not allow to continue, especially when said victims are in the same House. That is why, as Lord of Slytherin, I have altered this place," he pointed over his shoulder to the descending stairway, "The Chamber of Secrets, into a sanctuary for those who I feel are threatened by violence. Now, this is only temporary as I also

currently seek out my ancestor's ancient housing, otherwise known as the King Cobra Caverns, so, if you'll all step back."

When they obliged to his request, Harry turned and hissed, 'Stairs.'

As everyone stared, Astoria, Tonks and Tom shocked at hearing Parseltongue rolling off of Harry's tongue, a flight of emerald green stairs emerged from the wall around the edge of the tunnel, each one leading down into the Chamber's underbelly. Taking the lead, Harry told them, "Follow me; don't worry: the Basilisk is dead and my Chamber is protected by the magic of Hogwarts herself."

Following him down, the three Gryffindors and three Slytherins all watched as Harry then flicked his wand at several niches in the wall, before a blazing veil of emerald and silver light filled the chamber, its glow being cast by enchanted fire. Once at the base of the stairway, Harry turned again, looked back to the entrance and hissed, 'Close until I call.'

Turning back towards the tunnel, Harry led his small entourage through the dank darkness, the enchanted firelight allowing a small amount of warmth and comfort to accompany their steps. When they reached the seal that barred the entrance, Harry commanded it to open before he stepped through, turning back and holding out his arm to Hermione as she climbed through after him.

The sight before them took their breath away: what once had been simply an open Chamber with a pool of water leading into the sewage works was now a grand study filled with tables, chairs, leather sofas and a roaring fireplace, behind which was stood the statue of Salazar Slytherin, the giant head now replaced by a tall statue who held a serpentine stone seal in his hands.

Leading off this majestic room were a gathering of doors and, as they stepped into the centre, all of them gathering around the fireplace, the six followers all examined the doors before settling into the ring of chairs, each of them easing into a comfortable state that made Neville and Draco sigh with relief and Hermione just ease into her chair, her eyes on the bookshelves around them hungrily.

Seeing the look, Harry chuckled as he told them, "Welcome to the Viper's Sanctum, formerly known as the Chamber of Secrets: now, each of the doors leads to a bedroom that has its own en-suite

bathroom and small study area. The three doors at the back," he pointed next to the statue where three doors bearing the Crests of Gryffindor, Evans and Potter were stood, "Lead to a training room, Potions lab and indoor Herbology greenhouse."

He paused as Neville's eyes widened with shock and curiosity: with another chuckle, Harry explained, "As Heir of Gryffindor, I inherited a mastery of Transfiguration as well as a Charms Mastery from my Mother's family; creating this place was child's play. Now, don't worry Neville, you too Hermione: this place is an open-door policy to you three and my Slytherin friends as long as you respect one another and don't cause trouble. Now, sadly Hermione, I do have one rule and that is this: do not remove any books from this study: they are all ancient tomes on magic that I discovered earlier this morning within the cache hidden behind that statue. Now, as Lord Slytherin," he added, indicating said statue, "That is my Chamber and only I go in there unless I have a good reason to invite you in: I say that," he added hastily, "Because there are parts of my magic that I need to be alone to explore and I cannot do that in public. So, if I'm in there, then please knock so that I may remove any defences, all right?"

"Sure," Neville replied, his eyes wide with shock at Harry's revelation: he was really this powerful?

"Okay," Tonks added, looking around the Chamber as she waited for Harry to continue.

"All right then," Hermione nodded, before she asked, "Harry, are some of these what we purchased over the holidays?"

"They are," Harry replied, "While some are actually full of Dark Magic and have been sealed in Slytherin's Cache ever since his last heir, which was not Voldemort – he paused for the inevitable flinch – but another wizard that lived nearly 90 years ago; a wizard, in fact, who inspired a Muggle writer: Adrian Van Helsing."

"Bram Stoker?" gasped Hermione, "What happened to the Last Heir?"

"He was killed for betraying the vampires' existence to a Muggle," Harry replied, flicking his wand at the fireplace, its warm glow bathing the four of them as he continued. "Now, another little added

bonus for this place is the anti-detection and immunity wards around it: these wards were placed here by Slytherin himself and have withstood every attempt to bring them down. This means that, when you wish it, you may practice magic down here to your heart's content: so, with the tour over, are there any questions?"

"I have one," Astoria remarked, "How did you manage to get away with storing Dark Arts stuff down here?"

"They seek to challenge the Lord of Two Founders," Harry laughed, looking to her, "How do you think I did it Astoria?"

The others just laughed while Draco gave his betrothed a soft smile before he spoke up, "Even if they wanted to challenge him Astoria, Harry has more influence at his disposal as the Boy-Who-Lived, let alone as the Lord of FOUR Pureblood Houses."

"And that reminds me," added Harry, now looking to Draco and Tom, "If I'm the Heir of Gryffindor and Slytherin, we'll need to find out who the Heirs of Ravenclaw and Hufflepuff are: to that end, we need to build on our little entourage. Draco, you speak with Lord Malfoy and Tom and I will talk with our guardians; in the meantime, we all have lessons tomorrow morning so, feel free to stay here tonight. If you need anything, just call on Dobby, my House Elf, and he'll see what he can do."

"Thanks Harry," the group chorused, but, as Harry stood up, he turned away from his chair and walked over to the sealed entrance: looking up, the Lord of Slytherin smiled and inclined his head to the statue of his ancestor.

'Sometimes,' he thought, looking back to his friends, 'It's good to be in charge...and this is just the beginning.'

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Later that Night:

After a long and very relaxing bath in his chamber, Harry emerged from his bathroom, his body now covered by his Slytherin robe as well as a pair of light grey trousers that seemed to blend in with him. Making his way through his chamber to his bedroom, he was surprised when a low hissing, like the sound of a kettle, filled the

room. Harry, however, didn't panic: it just meant that someone was outside wanting to come in; lowering the ward that would dispel any unwelcome visitors, the Lord of Slytherin called out, "Who is it?"

"Tonks Harry," came the reply, "Can I come in?"

"Sure," Harry replied, sitting down on the end of his bed, his eyes on the door; seconds later, the door opened and Tonks stepped in: she had changed her hair so that it was shoulder-length and black as night, her eyes a deep shade of blue as she looked at Harry. With a smile, Harry asked, "What's up?"

"I want to thank you," replied the Gryffindor, "For everything: I have to admit that, when you said we could be friends, I expected some trouble, but you helped us take care of that. Now, I don't know if you know about this, but my family are..."

"Related to Sirius Black," nodded Harry, "Draco told me: what's wrong with that? I know he didn't really betray my parents and I have no intentions of hurting him."

'Yet,' he added in thought, a part of him recalling what a Light enthusiast Black had been at Hogwarts.

"Well," Tonks explained, "There's something else you should know: while people say that he is coming after you, the truth of it is, according to what my Mother told me, that he is actually looking for the real betrayer of your parents."

"Who?" asked Harry, his voice low and almost growling as he spoke the word.

"Another friend of your parents," explained Tonks, "Peter Pettigrew, but Harry; that's the thing: Sirius was sent to Azkaban for killing 13 Muggles and completely obliterating Peter Pettigrew off the face of the map. Now, while I have no real quarrels with Sirius, I just want to tell you that, because of what you've done, I want you to know that you have my undying allegiance and that I will stand with you, even if my parents disagree about it. Is that all right?"

"Of course," Harry nodded, a smile on his face as he added, "And don't worry: as long as you're down here Tonks, you're safe: Draco told me not to use your name," he laughed when she gave him a

look of shock, almost as if she had expected him to use her first name.

With another smile, Tonks gave a nod and coughed, "Well, see you then: good night, Lord Slytherin."

"Good night," Harry replied, watching as Tonks left the room; when the door was closed and the ward replaced, Harry then stood up and let the overhanging robe fall from his shoulders, his spine and back revealed in the mirror;

Revealing the black dragon tattoo:

'What are you?' thought Harry, recalling when he had seen it in his bathroom, 'Where did you come from?'

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Hogwarts: Edge of the Forest

The Dementors were restless: the old human fool who called himself headmaster had cut off their food supply and now they wanted to gorge themselves on the happiness of the students within.

However, they were waiting; they knew that he had been found when they had attacked him; and, while it had been an accident, they were ready, more than ever, to serve him.

/Emperor,/ they hissed as one, /We await your summons./

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Up in the Chamber, as Harry drifted off to sleep, a sibilant, icy voice whispered in his head;

/Emperor, we await your summons./

Ch 7 and I bet no-one was expecting that: Tonks at Hogwarts and this story turning into a Severitus; okay, maybe the second, but that's why I enjoy writing:

Anyway, what will happen when Harry introduces his Slytherin allies to his Gryffindor companions?

Also, can he, Draco, Tom and Hermione manage to locate the Caverns before Harry is pushed too far?

Keep Reading to Find Out;

Next Chapter: Harry discovers Slytherin's King Cobra Caverns, but why does the puzzle only seem half-complete? Lessons with Remus, tuition from Severus and some alone time with Hermione helps Harry to control the sudden maelstrom that burns within him, but will Dumbledore give up on the boy-Lord so easily? Also, some hidden research in the Caverns reveals the origins of a new breed of allies for the Lord of Shadows, but will Harry accept them? And, to top it all off, Harry manages to craft some control over one of his elements, with surprising results...

Following Chapter: Hogsmeade and a very unlikely alliance; plus our Shadow Lord wants a word with his newly-acquired allies about where they truly stand and Tom seems to have developed an unusual side-effect to his not-so-normal resurrection...

Chapter 11: Draco finds out! How will he react knowing who Tom really is – or was – and can he be trusted to keep his silence from his Father? Plus, Harry and his new band of allies discover a secret about Harry's Hogwarts Heritage and the Shadow Lord meets with an unlikely accomplice...

Please Read and Review...

And, after three chapters of votes, the winners of my poll are:

BELLA is going to be the foundation for the Dark Lord's return - "Let's just say that I think it's time for the Dark Lord to return to the world, but not how they think he will." – And, as for the pairings, they remain the same:

Harry/Hermione

Tom/Tonks

Draco/Astoria

Neville/Luna

Thank you to everyone who voted for the poll; rest assured that it is worth it; a big thanks to Perfect Lionheart for the inspiration behind the Dark Lord's 'so called' return;

Chapter 9: The Dark Is Rising

Great Hall: Next Morning:

When Harry, Draco, Tom, Hermione, Neville, Astoria and Tonks all entered the Great Hall for breakfast next day, the first thing they saw was Ron Weasley, who seemed to be entertaining a large group of Gryffindors with a very funny story. As they passed the Gryffindors, Hermione and Tonks watching Harry nervously, Weasley did a ridiculous impression of a swooning fit and there was a roar of laughter.

"Ignore him," said Hermione, who was right behind Harry, "Just ignore him, it's not worth it..."

"Would you look at that everyone?" Ron's loud voice suddenly cut through the hall as Harry stopped dead, "Harry Potter is so pathetic that he hangs around with House traitors and Death Eaters to earn friends."

"Oooh," laughed Alicia Spinnet, "Be very careful Potter: the Dementors are coming for all of you. Did you know they target traitors like you and that?"

That made Harry stop dead: for the second time that week, he was forced to summon the Sword of Gryffindor, his eyes blazing with rage as he turned and, raising the sword, asked, "And what, Miss Spinnet, is so wrong with Hermione and Tonks that you need to avoid using their names? I never took you to act like a blood purist."

"In fact," Tom added, standing next to Harry, "You know who she reminds me of Harry? Voldemort!"

"You're right Tom," sneered Harry, his eyes cold and dark as he walked over to the Gryffindor Table, his magic suddenly flowing freely through the blade of his sword as he added, "But then again, people always did say that Gryffindors would do anything to get attention: personally, I'm ashamed to be the Lord of that House!"

"The only Lord that you are Potter," hissed Dean Thomas, "Is a Dark Lord in Training!"

CRACK!

The Gryffindors suddenly jumped back in fright as the sword of their founder sliced clean through their table, its ancient magic dividing the table left from right. With a snarl, Harry turned and, pointing at the Head Table, announced, "I really didn't want to do this, but you leave me no choice: Sonorous!"

His voice, now amplified by magic, rang through the Great Hall as he exclaimed, "I, LORD HARRY JAMES GRYFFINDOR-EVANS-SLYTHERIN-POTTER, HEIR OF GODRIC GRYFFINDOR AND SALAZAR SLYTHERIN, DO HEREBY INVOKE MY RIGHT AS LORD OF GRYFFINDOR TO STRIP MINERVA MCGONAGALL OF HER POST AS HEAD OF HOUSE. AS LORD OF GRYFFINDOR, I ANNOUNCE THE NEW HEAD OF HOUSE TO BE SEVERUS SNAPE!"

"What?" gasped the hall, every one of the Gryffindor students looking up at the High Table in horror; Harry, meanwhile, raised the sword of Gryffindor and continued.

"SEVERUS SNAPE SHALL REMAIN HEAD OF GRYFFINDOR UNTIL I, LORD GRYFFINDOR, BELIEVE MINERVA MCGONAGALL WORTHY OF HER PLACE OR UNTIL I CHOOSE SOMEONE MORE WORTHY OF THAT POSITION. UNTIL THEN, I CEMENT SEVERUS SNAPE'S POSITION AND DECLARE THAT HE SHALL REMAIN HEAD OF SLYTHERIN AS WELL AS GRYFFINDOR: SO...MOTE...IT...BE!"

Silencing his voice, Harry watched with dark delight as Hogwarts suddenly began to tremble with a great energy, the magic of the Founders diverting the right over Gryffindor from McGonagall to Snape, who seemed both amused and stunned at Harry's work. Stepping up to him, Harry then asked, "So, Professor Snape: yesterday, several of your students attacked their own dorm-mates and have all, but ostracised them from Gryffindor. And now, today, they insult the lineage of a Lord and continue to blacklist these students: what do you think should be done?"

Snape's reaction was instantaneous, "150 Points from Gryffindor and a month's detention for the whole House for targeting one of their own: Lord Gryffindor, do you agree with this?"

"I do," Harry replied, looking to Dumbledore as he added, "What? Nothing to say Dumbledore? Good: just be glad that I didn't fire her!"

Dumbledore was as silent as the grave, while, with a single flick of his wand, Harry repaired the Gryffindor Table and went to sit with the Slytherins, his outstretched hand showing that he was now offering Hermione, Tonks and Neville places at the table with him. Seeing their Lord take his place with outsiders, several of the Slytherins wanted to argue, but after what they had just witnessed, they knew better than to even think of crossing Harry and making him mad twice in one day.

Once the post-trauma had settled down, Harry looked over and saw Hermione examining her new timetable.

"Oh good, we're starting some new subjects today," she said happily, but Harry was confused as to what he saw.

"Hermione?" he asked, frowning as he looked over her shoulder, "Has someone seriously messed up your timetable? Look – they've got you down for about ten subjects a day; there isn't enough time."

"I'll manage," Hermione explained to him, "Professor McGonagall sorted everything out...well, she did before they turned on me."

"Maybe," Harry nodded, a laugh escaping his lips as he looked again, "But look, see this morning? Nine o'clock: Divination; and underneath that, nine o'clock: Muggle Studies and – " he leant closer to the timetable, a disbelieving look on his face, "Look: underneath that: Arithmancy; nine o'clock. I know you're good Hermione, but how can you be in three classes at once?"

Hermione finally seemed to grasp what Harry was saying: her gift, the Time Turner, had been given to her as a means to help her, but, now that she listened to what Harry was saying, a part of her began to register that maybe there was something more to this. Looking to Harry, she nodded to Professor Snape and asked, "Can you speak to him for me? You're a Slytherin and Lord Slytherin, so he'll listen to you."

"I'll speak to him," Harry nodded, "But don't worry Hermione, because I'll make sure that you, Tonks and Neville can be around

Draco, Tom and I without Severus Snape breathing down your necks, which reminds me: Draco?"

The Malfoy Heir looked up and gave an inquisitive glance, "Yeah Harry?"

"Do you think you could help Neville in Potions so that Severus doesn't continue hating him?" Harry saw Neville looking almost shyly at Draco before he looked at Harry like he was taking the young Longbottom along Death Row.

"I'll try," Draco remarked, "Could we use the Sanctum?"

"Sure," Harry nodded, his eyes on his timetable, a frown touching his lips as he saw that his CoMC lesson had been changed from Tuesday to Monday and, if things weren't stressful enough, he had it with the Gryffindors.

Before he could think on it further, Hagrid entered the Great Hall; he was wearing his long moleskin overcoat and was absent-mindedly swinging a dead polecat from one enormous hand.

"All righ'?" he asked eagerly, pausing on the way to the staff table, "Yer in my firs' ever lesson! Right after lunch! Bin up since five gettin' everythin' ready...hope it's OK...me, a teacher...hones'ly..."

He grinned broadly at them and headed off to the staff table, still swinging the polecat: as he passed Dumbledore and McGonagall, however, Harry could have sworn that, beneath that bushy beard of his, Hagrid had sneered at them and scoffed, before moving down the table towards the opposite end, taking a new seat next to Professor Lupin.

"I wonder what he's been getting ready?" asked Tom and Harry had to laugh as he heard a note of anxiety in his voice.

Lowering his voice, Harry whispered, "He's going to show us a Hippogriff: I've already met him and spoken with him and, all I'll say is: we're in for a fun lesson."

The Hall was starting to empty as people headed off towards their first lesson, some of them giving Harry a rather intimidated stare as

they passed him; as they prepared to leave, the Gryffindor and Slytherin Trios both checked their timetables.

"We have Divination now; so we'd better be going," Hermione explained, looking to Neville and Tom, "Divination's up in the North Tower: it'll take us ten minutes to get there."

"I have Charms Tuitions with Professor Flitwick," Tonks explained, "So I'll be okay for a few more minutes."

"And we've got Severus for Potions Tuition," Harry explained, looking to Draco; as he did, he then laughed and added, "I wonder just how many will be there?"

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Lunch:

Harry was never one for admitting his own dark emotions for anyone, unless they were the Dursleys, but, by the end of his second lesson, which had been Transfiguration with McGonagall, he had openly declared, "One day I am going to kill her! How dare she even attempt to make a mockery of me in front of her precious Golden Prats!"

"Calm down Harry," Hermione gasped, seeing him openly speak out against anyone, even a teacher, was scary. "She was just pissed off because you disgraced her in front of the whole school."

Playing it safe, the seven of them had, yet again, ventured down into the Viper's Sanctum where Harry was now openly slashing the Sword of Gryffindor against the stone wall, the sword's ancient magic no match for its kinsman in magic. The stone walls of the chamber were protected, but even Harry was growing angrier with each swing: McGonagall had made it her private task to humiliate him in front of the whole class: if anything, it reminded him of how Severus had treated him when they'd had their first Potions lesson. Everything from staring forwards to making the odd note on his text was wrong for McGonagall, so, by the time Harry had reached the Sanctum, he had been ready to blow.

Turning to his friends, Harry sighed and sheathed the sword, its blade not even affected by his enraged warpath on the stone wall;

taking a seat in front of the fireplace, his eyes full of burning hatred as he added, "Well, if she thinks a little intimidation will make me rethink my decision to strip her of her place as Head of House, then she's sorely mistaken: you know what?" he leaned back and looked up, his eyes on his gathering, "I think that, for the first time, I understand just how dark Voldemort went back in the days of his youth. If he had to put up with bitches like her, then who could blame him for being a one-man warpath?"

"I can agree with that," Tom sighed, "Remember that she's been around for almost as long as the old git, so naturally, she'll have been given some of his venom."

"Thomas is right," Hermione nodded, "And besides Harry, if you remember, she's only doing this because you're no longer her little watchdog of Gryffindor: now you're her enemy and she hates it."

Harry lay back on the leather chair, his eyes closed and his body feeling a lot more tense than before; as he lay there, Harry suddenly felt someone take a hold of his head and guide it onto a chest, the soft sound of breathing now coupled with a heartbeat. Before he opened his eyes to see who it was, however, Harry then felt a hand running through his slick black hair, the very touch of the hand both soft and gentle on his hairline.

Opening his eyes, Harry found himself looking up into the eyes of Hermione Granger, her own eyes full of sadness and worry as she ran a hand through his hair. Slowly pulling himself up, Harry asked, "What are you doing?"

"Whenever I was angry or scared, my Mum and Dad would do this and it would relax me; sorry, I just thought—" she went to pull her hand away, but Harry, who was looking at Hermione curiously, guided his head into her lap and looked up at her.

"Keep doing that," he told her, "It feels nice."

As she complied with his request, Hermione continued, "Harry, I'm scared for you: you're a Lord at 13, an Elemental wizard and you have a reaction to the Dementors that we can't equal: and now, thanks to Ron's big mouth and Dumbledore's mind games, you're being forced to release darkness from inside you. They can't leave you alone, can they? For one year, they just can't do it and I just..."

She clutched onto a handful of Harry's hair and wept, her face almost shining with tears that were reflected in the firelight; still lying there, Harry lifted his hand and wiped her tears away, his voice soft as silk as he spoke to her.

"Hermione, there isn't a man out there, no, there isn't a force out there that is worth your tears, so please, don't cry," he sat up and looked over, noticing the others discussing the morning's lessons and reading through the odd book from the library. Taking Hermione's hand, Harry led her to the base of the statue where he dropped his voice and added, "You once said that you would follow me into this darkness, so please, don't ever be afraid of it; I would never, could never hurt you and I will never give you reason to doubt me otherwise. If you want me to be the Harry that you know and love then I can be that Harry."

Hermione gripped his robe and sobbed into his chest, her tears receding as she stood there, Harry's arm around her almost protectively as he whispered;

"I'm sorry Hermione: I promise that I'll never make you cry..."

However, in his mind, Harry found himself saying what his mouth couldn't:

'I love you...'

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Care of Magical Creatures:

Harry was pleased to get out of the castle after lunch; yesterday's rain had cleared; the sky was a clear, pale grey and the grass was springy and damp underfoot as they set off for their first ever Care of Magical Creatures class.

When she had finished crying in his arms, Hermione had thanked Harry and now she walked beside Harry in contented silence as they went down the sloping lawns towards Hagrid's hut on the edge of the Forbidden Forest. It was only when Harry then spotted a familiar red-head standing lazily against the wall of Hagrid's hut that Harry realised his calm demeanour wouldn't last. Weasley was standing

against the wall, his eyes on the six of them as they all made their way down the slope, his mouth curled into a snarl as he stood upright and walked round towards the front door.

Harry shook his head sadly as he whispered, "Some people just can't get the message."

"Don't worry about him," Draco insisted, following the red-head round towards the front of Hagrid's house; Hagrid was waiting for his class at the door of his hut; he stood in his moleskin overcoat, with Fang the boarhound at his heels, looking impatient to start.

"C'mon now get a move on," he called as the class approached, "Got a real treat for yeh today! Great lesson comin' up! Everyone here? Right, follow me!"

For one nasty moment, Harry could see that most of the class, save for the six of them, thought that Hagrid was going to lead them into the Forest; personally, based on his history with the place, Harry agreed with them: he'd had enough unpleasant experiences in there to last him a lifetime. However, Hagrid strolled off around the edge of the trees and, five minutes later, they found themselves outside a large paddock; there was nothing in there, but Harry swore for a moment that he could actually sense Buckbeak nearby.

"Everyone gather round the fence here!" called Hagrid, "That's it – make sure yeh can see. Now, the firs' thing yeh'll want ter do is open yer books – "

"How?" asked the loud, scathing voice of Ronald Weasley.

"Eh?" said Hagrid.

"How do we open our books?" Weasley repeated, revealing a worn, tired copy of the Monster Book of Monsters, which he had bound shut with a very weak-looking piece of rope. Other people took theirs out too; some had belted their book shut while others had crammed them inside tight bags or clamped them together with bull clips.

"You stroke the spine of course," remarked Harry, shaking his head as he, Draco and Tom all revealed open, calm copies of their books, Harry taking a moment to help Neville with his book. "How else would you calm a book with snapping jaws for pages?"

Hagrid gave a smile at Harry's resourcefulness before he shook his head and sighed, "And that'll be a point from Gryffindor for yeh mouth Mister Weasley and a point to Slytherin fer aidin' a teacher Mr Potter. Righ' then," he added, slowly walking away, "Yeh've got yer books an'...an'...now yeh need the Magical Creatures; so I'll go and get 'em. Hang on..."

He strode away from them into the Foest and out of sight, leaving Harry to shrug ruefully at his friends as he asked, "Don't tell me you lot had trouble with that?"

"I didn't," Draco whispered, "But the day before we left for King's Cross, I accidentally dropped the book and it wouldn't accept my stroking until it had calmed down."

"Maybe it's a dark version," Ron hissed, "Like Potter's; it's how he knew how to do it: thinking he's so big because he..."

SMACK!

To everyone's surprise, the impact had not come from Harry, but, as he turned, he saw Neville and Tom both holding out their hands, the edges of their knuckles flecked with red blood. Ron, meanwhile, was down on the floor, all of the class now looking at the two in question.

"I wish that you would just shut the fuck up Weasley!" snapped Neville, "Personally, you should be down on your knees praising the ground Harry walks on: he saved Ginny's life and still invited you to a formal meeting in the hopes of an alliance. It's your own fault he's exiled you and the others, so why don't you just grow up?"

"Right," laughed Ron, wiping blood from under his nose, "And what would you know of an alliance Longbottom? Like the Muggle-lover there," he pointed at Hermione, "And the Freak," he pointed at Tonks, "As well as the nobody and the Death Eater wannabe, all you are is Potter's spare wheel, his laughing joke."

It was as he said this, however, that something both frightening and very unusual happened: Harry, placing his hand on Neville's shoulder, stepped past the two allies and shook his head, his eyes narrowed as he hissed, "And you think you're so different Ron? All you were was my sidekick and now you're not even that: so you

think acting like Draco here gets you the attention you crave. You're not even worth the skin off my back, not that you could afford it: all you were after was the money and publicity. But now, all you're worth is this..." he gave Ron the finger and turned away, but not before he felt a powerful spell strike him in the spine.

That was like a spark to a fuse: all around them, a sudden cold had spawned up, the edges of the damp, dew-dropped grass suddenly icing over, creating the image of mist on the ground; at the same time, an ominous rumble of thunder sounded overhead and, as everyone turned, Harry then heard a familiar voice speaking to him in his mind.

/Emperor, your rage calls us; we shall punish those who harm you./

'No!' thought Harry, his chest clamming up as he looked upwards, his eyes noticing the darkness covering the skies; then, it happened: one by one, the whole class fell to their knees, most of them screaming and moaning, some curling in the foetal position and whimpering. However, in the midst of it all, a loud, piercing scream filled the air and, looking through his own fears, Harry saw a large black cloak swarming around Ron Weasley, a silver light being pulled from his chest as the cloaks enveloped him.

Harry had no other choice: reaching through the darkness, a part of him noticing Tom and Hermione screaming while Draco and Tonks were whimpering and Neville was crying, he pulled at the voice that had spoken to him before he commanded, /GO! Leave the one who harms me to those of higher power; if you harm him, they will send you away and there are questions that I need answering: as Emperor, I command you, BE GONE!/

Another piercing shriek filled the air as Harry looked forwards, his eyes noticing the Dementors flying away as if the devil himself were at their heels; at the same time, a strange coldness gripped his chest and, as he felt it, Harry doubled over, his heart literally stopping as he lay there, the sound of hurried footsteps being the last thing he heard before he blacked out completely.

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Unknown Location:

It had waited for him;

He knew it was out there, waiting, watching, ever vigilant, but he never knew where it came from;

Harry stood before a thin veil of dark light, his eyes trying to penetrate the darkness as he listened; he would hear it before he saw it;

FLAP!

The first beating sound rang through his mind, followed by another and another, the sound now picking up its pace as a shadow was formed in the darkness.

At the same time, a voice, colder than death, hissed at him, /Feed.../

Harry tried to move, tried to take a step back, but he found his legs were frozen together, his heart now like ice as the thing in the shadows neared;

/Feed.../

Harry reached up; he had to move, had to run, had to...

/FEED.../

An image, a large dark creature with huge demonic wings, materialised through the darkness, its jaws snapping around Harry, its hot breath and powerful fangs driving into him.

Then, he knew no more...

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Hogwarts:

"Harry?"

Harry's eyes snapped open, his emerald light now full of fire as he sat bolt upright, his hands pushing away as he cried, "No; leave me alone! I don't need you; I don't...get out of..."

"Harry!" cried the familiar voice of Hermione Granger, her hands now shaking his body, "It's all right; it was just a nightmare!"

"LEAVE ME ALONE!" Yelled Harry, his hands suddenly glowing with black magic as he pushed out, bolts of black lightning passing from his hands into the first thing he grabbed...

Which, unfortunately was Hermione Granger.

Her screams pulled him back; shaking his head vigorously, Harry pulled his hands back and held Hermione in his arms, her robes burned from the lightning that had flown from his hands, her eyes now red and puffy as she wept in his arms.

"Hermione," he gasped, "I'm sorry...I...I couldn't help it..."

"Harry!" Hermione smiled, her hands now in his, "You were screaming: I shouldn't have touched you."

Harry looked at her arms, his own eyes now full of guilt and horror as he saw red, blistered skin where his magic, his Lightning magic, had harmed her; looking into her eyes, Harry asked, "Where are we?"

"The Sanctum," Hermione explained, "Tom brought you here while everyone was being seen to by Professor Snape: he's punished Ron for what he said about you and for disrupting Hagrid's lesson, but Harry, there were..."

"Dementors," Harry nodded, finally recognising his bedchambers; pulling Hermione into his arms, he added, "I remember that: Hermione, I'm sorry for hurting you: I could never..."

"Never hurt me, I know," she nodded at him, her head on his chest, "Harry, your heart...they say it stopped...I thought you..."

Harry did the only thing he could do to help her calm down; putting his hand under her chin, Harry lifted her head and planted a kiss on her lips, his arms wrapped around her as he felt himself being lost in his best friend.

"Hermione," he whispered, pulling away from the kiss, "I will never hurt you, never leave you and never willingly turn my back on you: I

tried so hard to work out how best to say this, but, you accept me and now..." he planted another kiss on her forehead as he told her, plain and simple;

"Hermione, I love you."

As he let his arms fall, slowly climbing off his bed, he then noticed something in his chambers that he hadn't noticed before: a plaque, signed with the magical signature of Salazar Slytherin; a plaque that read:

King Cobra Caverns: alias, Slytherin's Chamber of Secrets

'Right in front of me the whole time,' he thought, looking from the plaque to Hermione as he added, 'In more ways than one.'

He then gasped as he felt Hermione take her place in his arms, her head on his chest as she whispered, "By the way, I love you too, my Lord of Shadows!"

As they sat there, Harry running his hand through Hermione's hair, he thought back to the Dementors and what had happened; for the first time since his first encounter with them, Harry knew, there and then, what he would have to do.

He needed to openly talk to a Dementor...

Ch 9 and Harry has not only discovered the CoS biggest secret, but also revealed his feelings to Hermione, but how do you speak openly with a Dementor?

Also, what is this EMPEROR that they speak of and how will it affect Harry's plans to become Shadow Lord?

Keep Reading to Find Out;

Next Chapter: Lessons with Remus, tuition from Severus and some alone time with Hermione helps Harry to control the sudden maelstrom that burns within him, but will Dumbledore give up on the boy-Lord so easily? Plus, Harry and Hermione discuss their new relationship, Hogsmeade and a very unique meeting; plus Tom seems to have developed an unusual side-effect to his not-so-normal resurrection...

Following Chapter: Draco finds out! How will he react knowing who Tom really is – or was – and can he be trusted to keep his silence from his Father? Plus, Harry and his new band of allies discover a secret about Harry's Hogwarts Heritage and the Shadow Lord meets with an unlikely accomplice...

Please Read and Review...

Chp10